

NOVEMBER 1990

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THE DARK SIDE

The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic



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The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

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THE DARK SIDE

The Magazine of the Macabre and Fantastic

Introduction

Greetings, fright fans. Welcome to the second issue of THE DARK SIDE, and to one of those rambling editorials where I get the chance to reveal a few of my own likes and dislikes in between letting you know what's in store this time round. First of all the dislikes, and there have been quite a few turkeys to choose from in 1990's lacklustre genre lineup. The takings have been counted and the biggest boxoffice success of the US summer turns out to have been the Patrick Swayze picture, GHOST, a gentle, old-fashioned supernatural comedy, which beat the megabudget TOTAL RECALL into second place. The rest of the field was largely made up of depressingly unimaginative sequels like ROBOCOP 2 and EXORCIST III, which all promised far more than they actually delivered. Come on guys, this sequelitis has got to stop. Let's have a few original movie plots for a change, like those seen in MIRACLE MILE, or Disney's excellent spider shocker, ARACHNOPHOBIA. Sadly the latter didn't perform well at the boxoffice because American audiences just didn't know what the title meant - depressing, isn't it?

It's a pleasure to renew our acquaintance with Linda Blair, who has been REPOSSESSED this month. Don't laugh, but I've ALWAYS been a great fan of Linda's. My heart bled for her in that immortal scene in AIRPORT 75 where she was wheeled past on a stretcher and somebody commented 'Poor kid! She's in Washington and her kidney is in Los Angeles!' Linda survived the operation and was nominated for an Academy Award for THE EXORCIST, but from the way her career has gone since then, I would think it somewhat unlikely that she will be up for another Oscar in the foreseeable future. Let's hope REPOSSESSED does her some good. After what she's done for the pea soup industry she deserves it!

As an impressionable young lad back in the early 1970s I remember being quite taken with an erotic chiller entitled VAMPYRES which featured former PLAYBOY centrefold Anulka, and the delectable Marianne Morris - two girls who could probably make a bishop kick a hole in a stained glass window. Visually the film was a knockout, and it remains the undoubted highpoint of the career of the Spanish-born director Jose Larraz, who made quite a few sex 'n' horror movies in the UK around this period. Very little has been written about Larraz over the years, and it seems to me quite a coup that Alan Jones (who always seems to bump into these odd people) has managed to track him down for a humorous and reing interview that dares to ask the burning question: Are there really no bisexuals in Tunbridge Wells?

Another who doesn't expose himself to daylight too often is Harry Alan Towers, the legendary take-the-money-and-run producer who has bred more fables within the movie industry than Broadway Danny Rose. Harry turned out to be a very lively and entertaining fellow, though when I arrived at his London flat for our interview to find him dressed in liberally ventilated pyjamas I was more than a little apprehensive at first of the direction that entertainment might take!

Publishing deadlines dictate that I must write these words before the first DARK SIDE has hit the newsstands, so it doesn't take the assistance of The Man With Two Brains to figure out the reason why there is no letters column in this issue. Next month things will be different - I trust that by then these offices will have been deluged with hundreds of meaty missives telling us what we are doing right and where we are going wrong! There will also be a new regular column answering readers' queries. So if you've been trying to track down a favourite old movie on video, or are going crazy trying to figure out the name of that bit-part player in GODZILLA VS THE SMOG MONSTER, drop us a line. We'd love to hear from you.



Allan Bryce

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THE REPOSSSESSION OF LINDA

REPOSSESSED is to THE EXORCIST what AIRPLANE is to aircraft disaster movies: an all-out spoof which casts exploitation movie queen Linda Blair as a young housewife named Nancy Aglet. Once a victim of demonic possession, Nancy seems to be doing okay (though she IS serving her family a lot of pea soup these days) until a mischievous demon pops out of her TV set and causes her to start up with the technicolor yawns again. When she follows this up by telekinetically rearranging the furniture, the rest of her harassed household realise that the only thing to do is to contact Father Mayii (Leslie Nielsen), the Exorcist who sent Linda's demons packing in the first place. But the poor old chap has checked into the Exorcist Retirement Home, and doesn't want to know...

When she was first approached to do this movie, Linda Blair didn't want to know either. 'I turned them down flat' says the actress. 'I told them, I've had all these jokes about the Exorcist all my life, and I don't want to be laughed at any more.'

But after I read the script I changed my mind. I suppose what really clinched it was when they told me that Leslie Nielsen would be playing the Exorcist. I loved him in AIRPLANE and THE NAKED GUN. He is a really funny man.'

The Linda Blair of the 90s is a far cry from the apple-cheeked 14 year-old high school student who startled the world with her evil antics in THE EXORCIST. 'I'm in my thirties now, and it's time to start thinking about whether I want to continue

What's got into Linda Blair? She's back in the pea soup, making a devilish spoof of the movie that made her famous!

Allan Bryce meets a movie scream queen who really can make your head spin!

acting or go more into the production side of movies. There's a lot of pain and suffering out there and I just want to speak out and say: "What the hell's happening here, you know?"

Of course this kind of meaningful social commentary has been absent from Miss Blair's filmography in the past. But the way she tells it she really hasn't had

much opportunity to control her own destiny until now. Caught up in the groundswell of post-EXORCIST fame, manipulated by money-grabbing agents and hounded by the gutter press, she has often been unfairly treated by the media, who never like to see child stars hold onto their fame.

The trouble with Linda is that she started at the top. When you earn an Oscar nomination for one of your first movie roles, you can only go downhill. She vividly remembers going to audition for the original EXORCIST movie. 'I came out from the interview and I said to my mother, "That was the filthiest piece of paper I have ever had to read!"

She was 13 when she made the film, 14 when it opened at cinemas worldwide and (appropriately enough) went on to become the 13th highest-grossing picture of all time. Many contemporary critics thought it was wrong to place such an innocent youngster in the midst of one of the most gruelling horror movies ever made, but Linda says it is only since she has grown up that she has come to appreciate their view: 'A child doesn't really understand these things,' she sighs.

'I really had no idea what the movie was about when we made it, all the underlying tones of the Devil and possession. To me it was almost like a joke and I didn't realise that adults would take it so seriously.'

Her parents were highly supportive though. 'They knew me well enough to realise it would do me no harm,' she says. 'But it upset me to see them go through a lot of ridicule for very unnecessary reasons. It is only a movie, after all. People must remember we are here to entertain. I





Linda Blair joins Leslie Nielsen in *Reposessed*

don't like all the pictures that are made, I don't like all the pictures I have been involved in, but I AM really proud of my involvement with *THE EXORCIST*. It took me a long time to understand I was part of a very big piece of history in filmmaking.'

Linda followed her *EXORCIST* triumph with a number of meaty roles in TV movies like *SARA T. - PORTRAIT OF AN ALCOHOLIC* and *BORN INNOCENT*, which consolidated her reputation as the most put-upon screen teenager of the 1970s. Her turbulent private life ran the predictable route to Hollywood maturity through the sex-and-drugs-in-the-headlines syndrome, with the gossip columns dining out on her coke bust at age 18 and the nude photoset she did for *OUI* magazine. Somewhere along the way she grew up and turned into the sparky, pneumatic heroine she is today.

Looking back, she most regrets having become involved in the sleazy 1983 exploitation drama *CHAINED HEAT*, where she played the innocent new 'fish' cast into a women's prison full of Playboy

centrefolds. That was the picture that marked the beginning of her Hollywood decline.

Blair explains it this way: 'I guess I slacked off for a while in the early 80s, and this agent came to me and said, "Why aren't you a big star?" I said, "Listen. I'm in my early 20s and I still look 16. Leave me alone for a while and let me grow up." But six months down the road I did need to make a living. So I went with this guy, one of the best agents in the business, and he put me in touch with a producer named Billy Fine, who I didn't know at the time made X-rated movies.'

'I'm sure you can guess the rest. The script that they gave me for *CHAINED HEAT* was nothing like the script that we ended up shooting. The movie became a T & A film. I cried more than you'll ever know, but there was nothing I could do. I had already been paid. My managers weren't there to support me. It was awful: it was a case of either take my top off in the shower or get sued. I can't tell you that this is a great business. People can be really mean.'

But her fans have stuck by her. In recent years Linda has been very busy travelling the world making countless low budget movies in the action and horror genres. Recent projects have included the *BABY JANE* type thriller, *BAD BLOOD*, and *GHOST HOUSE II* (an Italian quickie with David KNIGHTRIDER Hasselhoff). The latter is also known as *WITCH-CRAFT* - 'I haven't seen it,' she says, 'but I hear it's like a bloody Fellini movie. The Italians are very good at putting in a lot of graphics afterwards.' Anyone wanting to check these movies out will find them both on the Colourbox video label.

I mention that Blair

afficianados were very surprised and disappointed Linda wasn't asked even to do just a cameo in *EXORCIST III*, the big-budget new movie based on William Peter Blatty's book about a priest-killer on the loose in Washington. 'It really doesn't bother me' she shrugs. 'But my feeling is that the public will feel ripped off. People relate to me as an integral part of the show. It's like doing *GONE WITH THE WIND* as a completely different story with completely different actors.'

Still, at least she's getting her own back by starring in *REPOSSESSED*. This movie was financed on the basis of Blair's name alone, and a poster which warned, 'Just when you thought it was safe to eat pea soup again!' The actress says she's very pleased with the way the film turned out, and that it has genuinely helped her to exorcise old demons.

'I can honestly say that I have got Regan out of my system once and for all she concludes with a smile. 'I can now get on with a serious acting career. In fact at this moment I am putting together a film myself which is kind of a little political but doesn't preach in any way. It's about freedom of speech and who I am as a person. I just want people to take me seriously, then I'll be happy.' There's no doubt in my mind Linda will achieve her aims. This gal has got a good head on her shoulders - even if it does sometimes spin at 360 degrees... ■



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EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS TARA LEIGH, TONY GIGANTE, DIANNA FLAHERTY, KATHERINE ROMAINE AND MARCUS POWELL AS DR. VIALLINI, UN- PRODUCED SCOTT MORETTE
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PRODUCED BY TED A. BOHUS AND SCOTT MORETTE, WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY GLENN TAKAKJIAN

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FLAMENCO FEAR

THE EXPLOITATION
UNIVERSE OF JOSE
RAMON LARRAZ
Dark Side profile by Alan
Jones

"Directing is my reason to live. I've always been a very visual person. It stemmed from my early career in painting and photography. Horror, suspense and adventure movies excite me. So does sex. Men and women have all lusted after me over the years. But I'm not bisexual, I'm married with three children and live in Tunbridge Wells".

That one paragraph alone sums up the incredible film career and eccentric personality of Spanish director Jose Ramon Larraz. He's the man responsible, for putting the panic in *Hispanic*, the catatonia in *Catalonia* and the Viva in *Espana*. From his first celluloid atrocity *SHE DIED WITH HER BOOTS ON* to his latest *DEADLY MANOR*, his sleaze with ease sexploitation horrors have made him famous, or infamous (depending on your viewpoint), and a firm favourite with a growing legion of Eurotrash buffs.

Who could ever forget matronly Maggie Walker having a degrading incestuous relationship with her nephew Karl Lanchbury in *SCREAM AND DIE*? Or May 1973's *Playboy* nude centrefold Anulka fighting her lesbian lover for the last lick at an open neck would in *VAMPYRES*? I can't, and I've tried! Larraz's lip-smacking schlock movies are artless, reprehensible, prurient and terribly funny. And happily he's the first person to admit it.

Larraz was born in Barcelona in 1928. Graduating as a Doctor of Philosophy from that city's university he moved to Paris where he studied Art with the Louvre-based Rachel Boyer Foundation. Staying in Paris for the next decade, he worked as a comic book artist with illustrations world-syndicated by King Features and Opera Mundi in the publications 'Creepy' and 'Eerie'. During the Swinging Sixties he became a fashion photographer doing many top spreads and covers for 'Femme D'Aujourd'hui' and 'Vogue'. Vivian Neves, one of the era's most famous models,



posed for him and subsequently starred in Larraz's feature film debut WHIRLPOOL (1969).

Larraz said, "I never knew how to make movies. WHIRLPOOL happened by pure accident. My Belgian publisher had made lots of money from a children's comic and was looking for investments. At that time the soft-core sex film market had come of age and many distributors were turning over tidy profits from miniscule budget quickies. We decided to have a go ourselves and wrote a simple story containing loads of sex. I'm not biased towards exploitation but we had to make a surefire return on the £20,000 budget and there was no other way to sell it. We shot it in one week in England and had it certified in Denmark to hype up the sex-angle even more. We sold the distribution rights in America for £125,000. Not a bad return, yet it did me a disservice. It was a lousy start for my career. I was labelled a cheap, sexy movie director forever afterward".

Released in Britain two years later, WHIRLPOOL was hilariously retitled SHE

DIED WITH HER BOOTS ON with the running time cut by ten minutes. Produced by Larraz under the pseudonym Remo Odevaine, it told the turgid story of aspiring model Neves being invited by permissive Karl Lanchbury and Pia Anderson to join a *menage a trois* at their country cottage. After a few sex games – pretend rape in the local woods so she can register "violent emotion" for photographer Lanchbury – Neves enters his forbidden darkroom to discover the girl she's replaced was brutally murdered and the same fate lies in store for her.

A lurid Victorian melodrama update, WHIRLPOOL set the seal on Larraz' career. It relied heavily on over-emphatic gestures, pregnant pauses and sinister glances to tell a nonsensical slice of psycho-slashing more than the perfunctory hints of forbidden passion as upfront as they were for the time.

Next came SYMPTOMS, an evocative, if minor, journey

through the female interior landscape littered with Larraz' warped brand of male-anxiety images. Retitled THE BLOOD VIRGIN in some Eastern territories, and shorn by ten minutes to tighten up the story in Britain, Angela Pleasence played the pathologically jealous lesbian with all the subtlety she could muster, surrounded by subjective razor stabbing, sudden glimpses of phantom sex maniacs in mirrors and touches of necrophilia. Pleasence wasn't Larraz's first choice to play Helen Ramsey. "Jean Seberg was", he said. "When she turned down my offer I asked Rita Tushingham before considering Angela. SYMPTOMS has many thoughtful and persuasive touches. The horror verged on the ordinary because I wanted to slowly build the intensity of her madness".

Responsible for editing SYMPTOMS was Brian Smedley-Aston, veteran editor of over forty movies including TOM JONES, PERFORMANCE and ROLLERBALL. "Brian said he'd back my next picture if it turned out as good as SYMPTOMS but included incest, bloodletting and lesbianism! So I wrote VAMPIRES – DAUGHTERS OF DRACULA in three days and budgeted it at £40,000. We began shooting three weeks after we left Cannes". Another of Larraz' sensational attempts to push the erotic boundaries of the horror film to new limits, VAMPIRES lost three minutes of explicit male-fantasy imagery in Britain. It told the tale of two bisexual female vampires luring passerbys to their decrepit mansion to use them up within one night. But when Marianne Morris falls in love with

one victim, Murray Brown, it causes a fatal split between her and Anulka as he becomes the mainstay plaything each orgiastic night.

VAMPIRES was actor Karl Lanchbury's last film for the director. "After playing a small cameo role, he got married and opened up a pub in Kent", explained Larraz. Foregoing the plot for inane lectures on vintage wines, VAMPIRES was sordid tosh with one major failing. Murray Brown wasn't attractive in the least so it was hard to believe sultry Morris would keep him hanging around. Nevertheless VAMPIRES is noteworthy for being one of the few



undead movies to take the connection between sex and death to its logical conclusion. And it's perhaps the only Larraz film which holds up when viewed today.

Around this time the political climate began changing back in Larraz' home country. General Franco had died and Spain's censorship laws relaxed, allowing explicit soft-core items to be promoted under the 'S' - for Sex - rating. Naturally Larraz was one of the first directors to take advantage of the situation and two 1978 movies were the result. **THE CHANCE** - "I can't remember anything about that" - and the farcically overheated tale of gypsy passion **LA VISITA DEL VICIO** (1978). A pathetic porno paella with Patricia Granada and Lydia Zuazo trapped in a sado-masochistic threesome with horserider Rafael Machado, it opened in Britain as **THE VIOLATION OF THE BITCH** in 1980 with fifteen minutes of hard eroticism missing.

Then came "one of the worst films I've ever been involved with" admitted Larraz. **"THE GOLDEN LADY"** (1979) was a female James Bond spoof set in the world of high finance and oil cartels. It was written



"Tunes help you breath more easily..."

by some pretty boy who couldn't write a letter home to his mother let alone a script! One of the props was a briefcase with Top Secret printed on the side. That's how stupid it was". Starring Christina World, Suzanne Danielle and, in the tiniest walk-on, Desmond (Q) Llewelyn, **THE GOLDEN LADY** experience made Larraz determined to head back to the Costa Del Terror where he reigned in Spain for the next few years.

The horror movies he made there were very hard to see then, virtually impossible now, and Larraz is deliberately hazy about them himself, "Most were backed by a fruit exporter. I've always seen that as one of my major problems. I've never had a proper understanding producer, only Philistine moneymen telling me what I should do... **STIGMA** (1981) is the only movie I have made containing no sex. It mixed **CARRIE** and **THE FURY** in a tale of psychic reincarnation. It starred Alexandra Bastedo who also appeared in **MOURNING** (1980) as a grief-stricken widow. I



"Wait till I get my hands on the guy who sold me that face cream."

directed a **PEEPING TOM** inspired thriller titled **EL MIRON/THE OBSERVER** (1980) and two highly successful domestic black comedies, **MAGIC POWDER** and **LA MOMIA NACIONAL/THE MUMMY, MY MUMMY** (both 1981). The latter was a sort of **YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN** about a female mummy lusting after the archaeologists who discovered her in Egypt. It was quite surreal and made a fortune in Spain".

But there is one movie Larraz hates talking about even more - **LOS RITOS SEXUALES DEL DIABLO/BLACK CANDLES** (1981). "Oh! No. You can't have seen that surely! What can I say? I am a free-thinker and my family had to eat. Larraz, "It's the one film I'm truly ashamed of".

After the unexpected success of **LA MOMIA NACIONAL**, Larraz was offered an avalanche of sexy horror comedies. "That's all anybody thought I could direct from that point on". So he surprised everyone by taking on his most auspicious project to date, a highly-acclaimed six hour miniseries based on the life of **GOYA**. Then it was back to horror basics as Larraz helmed two direct-to-video Spanish/American coproductions under the pseudonym Joseph Braunstein. "I shot **REST IN PIECES** (1987) in Spain with a boring script. An idiot script means an

"The blood's rushing to my head."



idiot film but I enjoyed working with Dorothy Malone". **REST IN PIECES** had Jean Vail, staying at Malone's country mansion in order to collect her late aunt's inheritance, and being plagued by gory dismemberment nightmares.

"I shot **EDGE OF THE AXE** in Spain too with four days of Los Angeles' locations. It was a **PSYCHO** movie with lots of blood. Gore is horror porno and has no real value anymore. I decided my next movie would concentrate on the sensation of fear as in Stanley Kubrick's **THE SHINING** and Robert Siodmak's **THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE**".

As luck would have it Brian Smedley-Aston contacted Larraz in 1989 to direct "a creepy story" for him and the finished product, **DEADLY MANOR**, was heavily promoted at the 1990 Cannes Film Festival. The **FRIDAY THE 13TH** retreat was shot on location in New Jersey last Autumn and concerns a bunch of teenagers forced to stay the night in an old dark house inhabited by a deranged, scarred model, victim of a Hell's Angels attack, seeking vengeance on youth in general.

Larraz explained, "I had the idea based on an actual incident that happened to me a long time ago. The wife of a Belgian friend died in a car crash and he kept the smashed-up vehicle in his garden as a monument to his grief, he spent hours in the wreck playing the same songs they heard that day over and over again. It's hardly a new concept putting kids in a scary situation but the strangeness of finding the car, the coffins and bodies buried behind walls seemed slightly different". in a car crash and he kept the smashed-up vehicle in his garden as a monument to his grief. He spent hours in the wreck playing the same songs they heard that day over and over again. It's hardly a new concept, putting kids in a scary situation but the strangeness of finding the car, the coffins and bodies buried behind walls seemed slightly different".

He continued, "It's a very modest movie. I deliberately didn't set out to make just another slashing exhibition. I don't use the stormy mansion concept in the obvious way. The mood is what sets **DEADLY MANOR** apart from other similar movies aimed solely at video rental".

Larraz was pleased with the performances from his cast of unknowns all culled from the New York area, "because the manor location was only 45 minutes away from Times Square". What he wasn't pleased with were the special make-up effects. "We didn't have any money," he sighed. "The model's scarred mask is really appalling. And we should have been able to construct more bodies to make the wall scenes more frightening. We didn't have any money for essential props either like the motorbikes. We had to borrow them from friends of the production crew. It was hard work making **DEADLY MANOR** and quite where it fits into today's horror market I don't know, but I've never worried about that in the past, and I won't start now".

Calamity

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regular cast: Patrick Stewart, Jonathan Frakes, Michael Dorn, LeVar Burton, Gates McFadden, Brent Spiner, Wil Wheaton, Marina Sirtis, Denise Crosby (first season only), Diana Muldaur (second season only), Whoopie Goldberg (from second season). (Gates McFadden is absent during second season).

ENCOUNTER AT FARPOINT

(pilot) wr. Gene Roddenberry, DC Fontana, dir. Corey Allen.

Riker, Dr. Crusher and her son, and LaForge join Captain Jean-Luc Picard and the rest of the crew aboard the new Enterprise en route to a civilisation eager to join the Federation. Suddenly, the Squire of Gothos - sorry, Q - materialises on the bridge to announce that he is putting humanity on trial. John De Lancie makes the first of a number of appearances as Q; De Forest Kelley puts in a brief cameo appearance as a now ancient Dr. McCoy. Director Corey Allen, whose credits range from *Hill Street Blues* to *Murder She Wrote*, is best known for his ability to direct large casts.

THE NAKED NOW

wr. John DF Black, J Michael Bingham, dir. Paul Lynch.

Transparent and shameless rehash of the original's "The Naked Time" (a far superior title). Obviously if you do an episode where the regular characters behave out of character or in which those characters are deeply explored, it's best to run a few episodes establishing those characters first.

CODE OF HONOUR

wr. Kathryn Powers and Michael Baron, dir. Russ Mayberry.

The writers of the pilot for *Fantastic Journey* (also contributors to the *Logan's Run* TV

As readers will almost certainly be aware, the earlier episodes of *STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION* have been released on video in the U.K. for rental, and are now being released to the sell-through budget video market. Simultaneously, the series has just begun U.K. transmission on BBC2, to be followed by a run on the SKY One channel on the Astro satellite service. At a later date, hopefully in anticipation of their availability to the U.K. audience, we'll present a similar guide to the third and subsequent seasons. It has been decided to take this approach in order to offer detailed opinion and information rather than trim it all down into a pointless and bland list of titles and credits.



Jean-Luc Picard boldly goes...

series) turn in a story with a touch of "Amok Time". The ruler of a world with a rare vaccine the Enterprise needs insists on taking Tasha for his bride...and she must duel for the "honour" with his estranged spouse! Russ Mayberry directed numerous cop shows at Universal during the 1970's.

THE LAST OUTPOST

wr. Richard Krzemien, Herbert Wright, dir. Richard Colla.

Introducing the Ferengi, chimp-like weasels who are a parody of capitalism gone mad and were intended as the series' new resident villains. Although they make a couple more appearances, and are memorably described by one member of the show's production team as "cunning little shmucks who piss everybody off, they have not made the grade, and are replaced as lead menace in later episodes by the good ol' Romulans and the robotic Borg. Here, the Enterprise is pursuing a Ferengi ship, only for both vessels to be stopped in their tracks by an all-powerful entity. Anybody who's seen "Arena" knows what happens next... Richard Colla directed *V - The Final Battle*.

WHERE NO ONE HAS GONE BEFORE

wr. Diane Duane, Michael Reaves, dir. Rob Bowman.

Yet another flagrant and inferior swipe of an earlier title, but at least the show had no qualms in admitting it was ripping off the original series (and the viewers). This is acclaimed by many sources as a superior episode, with the Enterprise travelling to the very edge of the universe, where reality and unreality meet with inevitably discombobulating results.

LONELY AMONG US

wr. Michael Halperin, DC Fontana, dir. Cliff Bole.

Otherwise known as *The*

Man Trap" meets *Journey To Babel*, although the premise — an alien force takes over Enterprise crew people, jumping from host to host like a bodysnatching flea — is not exactly a new one. It is, however, always a fun one, for cast and audience alike.

JUSTICE

wr. Ralph Willis, Worley Thorne, dir. James L. Conway

The Enterprise stops off at a "paradise planet" where the locals live for pleasure. Wesley breaks a bizarre law and is sentenced to death, with that oratory of Prime Directive forbidding Picard to rescue the little brat. I must admit that coming from the *Dirty Harry* school of diplomacy myself, I'm extremely intolerant of Picard's constant flinching over irritable diplomats and tolerance of absurdities — then again, the entire universe would probably be at war! But if ever there was a case for General Order 24, Mr. Scott, this is it.

THE BATTLE

wr. Larry Forrester, Herbert Wright, dir. Rob Bowman

Vengeful Ferengi force Picard to relive a confrontation with them in his previous Starship from nine years earlier.

WIDE AND

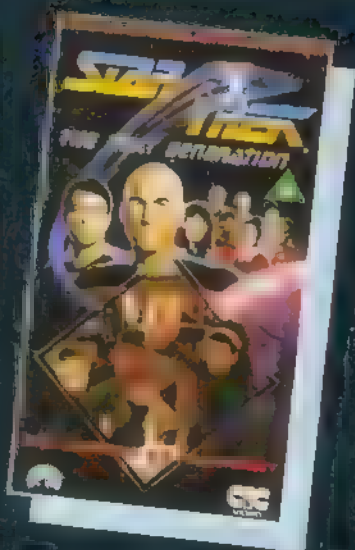
wr. Maurice Hurley, Gene Roddenberry, dir. Cliff Bole

Geordie La Forge is the blind crewman with a visor like *X-Men's* Cyclops and a sixth-sense sight like *Daredevil*. In "The Naked Now" he fantasises about what it would be like to have normal sight, and in this episode he gets it, only to find the grass only looks greener... It's all happening because of that mischievous scamp Q, who has returned to transfer his powers to Riker... Shades of "Where No Man..." and "Charlie X" here, as Riker in effect becomes an all-powerful god.

HAVEN

wr. Tracy Torme, Lan O'Kun, dir. Richard Compton

When The Bough Breaks



Here, in an essentially comedic episode of arranged marriage, Majel Barrett plays Deanna Troi's interfering mother. Apparently we don't get to see Haven (Heaven?), but there are some amusing comic ideas such as a pet plant, talking jewellery boxes, and a tradition of Troi's homeworld to conduct weddings naked (kind of numbs the honeymoon, doesn't it?). So-called humorous episodes of drama series are always dodgy territory, but this one appears to have been well-received by reviewers.

THE BIG GOODBYE

Picard, Data, and Dr. Crusher become trapped in a Holodeck fantasy world built around Picard's preference for private eye pulps. It's interesting that this episode is apparently a fan favourite, as it's so far removed from everything that *Star Trek* is really about. Parallels with "City On The Edge Of Forever" and particularly "A Piece Of The Action" are obvious. Perhaps trekkies (or "Trekkers") don't watch as much non *Trek* TV and cinema as the rest of us TV buffs, but quite frankly, if I see one more private eye pulp novel pastiche, I'll scream. AAUUGH!!!

DATALORE

wr. Robert Lewin, Maurice Hurley, Gene Roddenberry, dir. Rob Bowman

Data discovers "the enemy within" when a journey to his now barren homeworld results in the discovery of a dismantled duplicate which, when re-assembled, turns out to be the cute little fellow's evil, dark side.

ANGEL ONE

wr. Patrick Barry, dir. Michael Rhodes

The all-male crew of a missing freighter are located on a planet dominated by women (recalling Roddenberry's unsold early '70's pilot *Planet Earth*), and Riker becomes involved with the society's leader. Patricia McPherson of *Knight Rider* guest stars.

HOOTLOO

wr. Maurice Hurley, Robert Lewin, dir. Paul Lynch

Alien computer wizards fix the Enterprise computers just a little too well during maintenance work in the inevitable beware of computers yarn. Plus, more of that lazy script-writers' device, the dreaded Holodeck.



Action from 'Encounter at Farpoint'

TOO SHORT A SEASON

wr. Michael Michaelian, DC Fontana, dir. Rob Bowman

Clayton Rohner guests as an elderly ambassador who makes himself young again to deal with a terrorist threat. *Star Trek* followers will die "The Deadly Years" or Susan Oliver's transformation at the close of "The Cage"/"The Menagerie", but the episode more closely resembles "Fires Of Death" for *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*, and particularly "The Bridge Of Lions Afloat" for *The Man From UNCLE*, aka the feature *One Of Our Spies Is Missing*.

WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS

wr. Hannah Louise Shearer, dir. Kim Manners

"Min" and "And The Children Shall Lead" in reverse, as an artistic but impotent world makes off with the most intelligent of the Enterprise youngsters. Bit embarrassing for those left behind.

HOME SOIL

wr. Karl Guers, Ralph Sanchez, Robert Sabaroff, dir. Corey Allen

Exactly why it takes three writers to rip off Gene Coon's "Devil In The Dark", two of them credited with "story", we shall have to wait to see.

COMING OF AGE

wr. Sandy Fries, dir. Michael Vejar

Wesley takes a test to join Star Fleet Academy, while Picard begins to sniff the first suspicions of a "Conspiracy".

HEART OF GLORY

wr. Maurice Hurley, Herbert Wright, DC Fontana, dir. Rob Bowman

Renegade Klingons seek to revive the animosity between the Klingons and the Federation, attempt to sway Worf to their cause.

THE ARSENAL OF FREEDOM

wr. Richard Manning, Hans Beimler, Maurice Hurley, Robert

Lewin, dir. Les Landau

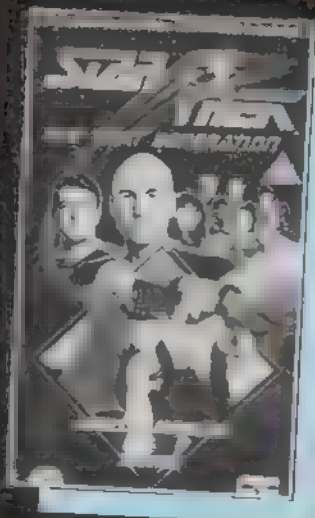
With Picard and Crusher trapped on a planet's surface, the Enterprise must fend off the automated weapons system of a community of mercenaries, long since wiped out by their own creations. Originally intended as a Picard/Crusher romance, this episode is reputedly now "action-packed". Let's hope so, 'cause if there's one thing this series needs.

SYMBIOSIS

wr. Robert Lewin, Richard Manning, Hans Beimler, dir. Win Phelps

With Maurice Hurley's previous track record consisting of *Miami Vice* and *The Equaliser*, a confrontation with intergalactic drug-runners was probably inevitable. Judson Scott and Merit Buttrick from *The Wrath Of Khan* guest star; Win Phelps has directed such quality drama as *L.A. Law*, *The Bronx Zoo*, and *Studio 54*. Of course, this being *Star Trek* — even the new one — it's all a bit





more complex than that, even though the anti-drugs preaching is apparently not. To compound the misery, Wesley delivers the lecture.

SKIN OF EVIL

wr. Joseph Stefano, Lianne Laurs Shearer, dir. Joseph Scafaro

Joseph Stefano, the maestro behind both Hitchcock's *Psycho* and the superlative sci-fi/gothic horror series *The Outer Limits*, penned this story of Tasha Yar's demise after Denise Crosby decided to depart the cast. A typically Stefano title and monster is accompanied by a '60's-style planet set. Although Tasha gets to make her farewell speech courtesy of a pre-recorded message, her actual demise is pleasingly swift and random for a regular character, accurately conveying the senseless and suddenness of murder.

WE'LL ALWAYS HAVE PARIS

wr. Deborah Davis and Hannah Louise Shearer, dir. Robert Becker

but we won't have a romance story with Picard, as a second attempt gets squashed by Roddenberry, Stewart and others. What we do have is a story about a loopy scientist

playing around with time-travel experiments, which certainly sounds much more interesting. The Holodeck figures prominently, and with such a wonderful toy on hand, one wonders why they ever bother to leave it. Shearer and Davis worked together frequently on *Knight Rider*.

CONSPIRACY

wr. Robert Sabaroff, Tracy Torme, dir. Cliff Bole

Notoriously gruesome tale reminiscent of *The Outer Limits*, "The Invisibles" as well as numerous other body-snatcher type yarns. If the effects are as strong as described, don't bother to watch this one on Auntie Beeb, wait for Sky...Henry Darrow of *The High Chaperon* and the *Invisible Man* pilot guest stars in this tale of political rebellion against the constraints of the Prime Directive.

THE NEUTRAL ZONE

wr. Deborah McIntyre, Mona Glee, Maurice Hurley, dir. James Conway

Great idea has three 20th-century Earth folk revived from cryogenic freezing into Star Trek's 23rd century, a financial wizard, a C&W singer, and a housewife. Then (as the title suggests), the Romulans show up...

By David Mervin

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SECOND SEASON

THE CHILD

wr. Jason Summers, Jon Povill, Maurice Hurley, dir. Rob Bowman

With the writers strike of this season taking its toll on the production of all U.S. TV series at the time, the producers plundered the already-written scripts for the aborted *Star Trek* revival in the late '70's, although Hurley maintains he "never looked" at the

guish minor villain just before his spaceship picks up on him...No, it's not Harry Mudd and his girls, although similarities don't end there...Writer and ex-cap Amos began his career as an advisor of *Kojak*, later contributing to *Knight Rider*, *Airwolf*, and *Street Hawk*.

LOUD AS A WHISPER

wr. Jacqueline Zambrano, dir. Larry Shaw

A pompous deaf and dumb



'The Child'

original script, just swiped the premise. The story, which also introduces new characters Dr. Katherine Pulaski (Diana Muldaur, veteran actress of two original *Star Trek* episodes) and barkeep Guinan (fading movie lead Whoopie Goldberg), has Deanna Troi impregnated by an alien life force.

WHERE SILENCE HAS LEASE

wr. Jack Sowards, dir. Winich Kilbe

An old chestnut - an all-powerful alien captures the Enterprise because he wants to study humankind. Finally, diplomat Picard wigs out and says he'll destroy the ship before he'll surrender half his crew to the alien. Corbomite Manoeuvre, anyone?

By David Mervin

ELEMENTARY, DEAR DATA

wr. Brian Alan Lane, dir. Rob Bowman

Data and Geordie, playing around as Holmes and Watson in the Holodeck, accidentally create a villainous Moriarty who endangers the ship. Another fan favourite - funny, when *Lost In Space*, *Voyage*, and the original *Star Trek* started pulling stunts like this, everybody said the shows were going to the dogs.

THE OUTRAGEOUS OKONA

wr. Les Menchen, Lance Dickson, David Landsberg, Burton Amos, dir. Robert Becker

The Enterprise picks up a ro-

mediator sent to defuse a dangerous situation is rendered helpless when his entourage of interpreters are murdered by rebels, effectively leaving him powerless to understand anything that is going on around him.

THE SCHIZOID MAN

wr. Hans Beimler, Richard Manning, Tracy Torme, dir. Les Landau

Two medical emergencies split the Enterprise. "Away Team" while a loony scientist splits his dying body to inhabit Data's computer brain. Once again, a bogus Data rooms the ship...Torme named the script after his favourite episode of *The A-Team*.

UNNATURAL SELECTION

wr. John Mason, Mike Gray, dir. Paul Lynch

What is the cause of the strange effect making everybody age rapidly? Recycled old scripts is my bet.

A MATTER OF HONOUR

wr. Wanda Haight, Gregory Amos, Burton Amos, dir. Rob Bowman

As part of an exchange programme, Niker joins the crew of a Klingon vessel, only to find that his new ship may have to destroy the Enterprise...Guest star Peter Onor co-starred in the final season of *Knight Rider*.

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

wr. Melinda Snodgrass, dir.



Geordi,
played by
LeVar
Burton



WITNESS: SCHEERER

Mighty regarded and Emmy-nominated episode that earned its writer the job of story editor on the show for a while. Data is put on trial by a Star Fleet officer who wants the ondoid taken apart for study, claiming that as a machine, Data has no right to life. Silly contrivance reminiscent of the original series' courtroom theatrics has Riker forced to prosecute.

THE DRAPHIN

wr. Scott Rubinstein, Leonard Modinow, dir. Rob Bowman.

Wesley finds true love with a spininess who has other obligations, but there's a twist.

CONTAGION

wr. Steve Gerber, Beth Woods, dir. Joseph Scanlon.

With the Romulans lurking nearby, Picard and Data must beam down to a mysterious world to defeat a computer virus that has already destroyed one vessel and is now eating away at the Enterprise.

THE ROYALE

wr. Tracy Torme, dir. Cliff Bole.

Writer Torme took his name off this script about a Vegas-style casino in space (didn't Glen Larson's *Buck Rogers* do that one??) after it was heavily rewritten. "It went from a strange episode to a stupid episode," said Torme. Allegedly the "Spock's Brain" of the new series.

TIME SQUARED

wr. Kurt Michael Bensmiller, Maurice Hurley, dir. Joseph Scanlon.

Originally intended to be a lead-in for the later episode "Q Who", Roddenberry mixed Hurley's plan to make this story's mysterious unexplained phenomenon the work of Q, thus rendering it all rather strange. The idea is great—the Enterprise beam a wounded shuttlecraft's pilot on board, only to find that it's another Captain Picard, who has travelled back in time to save the Enterprise from forthcoming destruction! Spooky.

THE ICARUS FACTOR

wr. David Assael, Robert McCullough, dir. Robert Iscove.

Having met Picard's mum in "Where No Person..." and Deanna's mum in "Haven", we now meet Riker's dad, when Riker is offered his own command. Rites of passage also for Worf.

PEN PALS

wr. Hannah Louise Shearer, Melinda Snodgrass, dir. Winrich Kolbe.

Data violates the Prime Directive to answer a distress call from an alien child, while this time Wesley undergoes rites of passage in a command situation.

Q WHO

wr. Maurice Hurley, dir. Rob Bowman.

Q returns, and the series introduces new foes the Borg, a race of unstoppable cybernetics. "What we really wanted to do" Hurley told an interviewer, "but couldn't because of money, was create a race of insects. Insect mentality is great because it's relentless. The Borg are a variation (of that). They don't care. They have no mercy, no feelings...their own agenda and that's it...If all of them die getting there, they don't care..." Lycia Naff, excellent in the two-

A Klingon ponders 'A Matter Of Honour'.



The Next Generation

part *Mister The Sea Queen* plays clumsy Ensign Gomez, some comic relief in this heavy saga.

SAMARITAN SNARE

wr. Robert McCullough, dir. Les Landau.

With Picard hospitalised, Riker ignores Deanna's empathic advice and allows Geordie to help aliens repair a damaged spaceship.

UP THE LONG LADDER

wr. Melinda Snodgrass, dir. Winrich Kolbe.

Pro-choice possible, with two

alien races on the verge of extinction and neither willing to help the other survive; Riker and Pulaski are cloned against their will.

MANHUNT

wr. Tracy Torme, dir. Rob Bowman.

A sequel of sorts by Torme to his two earlier episodes "Haven" and "The Big Goodbye", although once again he took his name off the finished result. For those who want to see Deanna's mother, "Journey To Babel" and the private eye pastiche again "AUGH!!! There, I warned you, here they are."

THE EMISSARY

wr. Thomas Calder, Hans Beimler, Richard Manning, dir. Cliff Bole.

Remember all those comic old yams about Japanese who were trapped on South Pacific islands, unaware the war had ended? Here we have a group of frozen Klingons, unaware that their people have made peace with the Federation. Suzi Plakson, who played a Vulcan in "The Schizoid Man", plays Worf's half-human, half-Klingon romantic interest.

PEAK PERFORMANCE

wr. David Komper, dir. Robert Scheerer.

There seem to be as many old *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea* plots in this series as there are old *Star Trek* themes. Here, Riker and Picard are set against each other in war games, and the Ferengi put in a brief appearance.

SHADES OF GREY

wr. Maurice Hurley, Hans Beimler, Richard Manning, dir. Rob Bowman.

"It was a money episode," said Hurley, about this "cheater" as they're known in the trade, which utilises clips from previous episodes around a limited amount of new footage to save money or time. Set entirely in sick bay, Riker lies stricken with a deadly virus, and recalls earlier escapades courtesy of Pulaski's efforts.



RAGE

ON SALE OCTOBER 24, ASK FOR IT BY NAME



Flying in a Rage
falling onto the world
Parrot stretched
and uncured.
from the cage
escape and Rage.



A steal at only 65p twice a month, RAGE is the only magazine with a bite the size of a Sumo wrestler. Loaded with exclusive interviews including the most up to date Betty Bee story, packed full of news, reviews AND intimate details of your favourite stars. We've also got brilliant competitions, record and film reviews, and the latest news from around the country.

To celebrate our first ever issue we're giving away a **free compilation cassette** with the hottest tracks of the nineties from The Soup Dragons, De La Soul, Blue Pearl and a whole lot more.



WARNING

this magazine **BITES**

VIDEO VAULT

Key to the ratings:
... excellent
... good
... mediocre
... poor

The door to the video vault creaks open. The Dark Side tunes in to the latest in TV terror.



DEMON WIND
RCA Columbia Video
Released 12th October
**

'Lets kick some supernatural ass' says a character in this low-budget EVIL DEAD ripoff, and that's one of the better lines in the script! It opens at full pelt with a gory flashback to 1931 when the forces of evil come visiting a remote farmhouse, leaving the inhabitants battered, burned, and generally scattered all round the landscape. Inside, the last survivor battles with a creature straight out of the zombie handbook who chuckles 'Spells can't keep us out' just before his chest splits open disgorging vast quantities of tapioca pudding. Whew - some party!

Then we flash forward to the present day and join the usual bunch of brainless teens as they descend upon the farmhouse, which belongs to the grandparents of one of their number. They immediately suspect that something is wrong, because even though it's almost 60 years later nobody has got round to cleaning the place up yet, and there are bits and pieces of skeletons everywhere. 'Something bizarre is going on here' states one of the more observant teens after his girlfriend vanishes in a flash

of blue light and returns as a puffy-faced zombie. From there on in the dialogue thankfully takes second place to yukky special effects as an army of grotty-looking demons (who spurt yellow blood when blasted with shotguns) surround the place in scenes that will be very familiar to anyone who's seen NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. Plot, performances and dialogue are bottom-of-the-barrel, and some of the opticals are even worse. But Lance Anderson's rubbery makeup work is fun, particularly in the climactic punch-up where one character turns into a blatant plagiarism of the big-domed mutant played by David McCallum in THE OUTER LIMITS. This also provides the film with its only moment of originality: facing up to the living embodiment of Satan (who resembles a walking strawberry jelly), our hero doesn't bother with any of that magic spell lark - he just delivers a swift kick to old Nick's wedding tackle. That'll bring tears to his devilish eyes...

Certificate 18. Running Time: 88 minutes.
A.B.



Peter Weller takes on the monsters of LEVIATHAN.

LEVIATHAN
CDS Fox Video
Released 27th October
**

Big budget underwater thrills from George Pan Cosmatos, director of RAMBO 2 and OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN. Ridley Scott's ALIEN provides the uncredited inspiration for this slightly wet yarn about an oceanic mining team (led by ROBOCOP's Peter



LEVIATHAN - ALIENS underwater

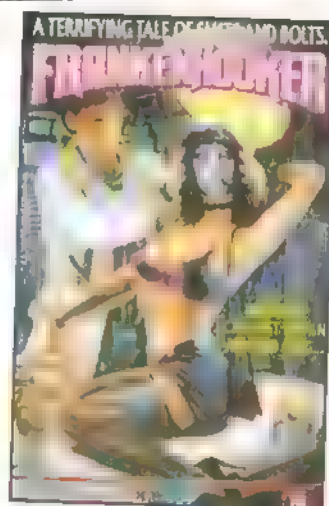
Weller) whose troubles begin when they stumble across a sunken Russian freighter, apparently scuttled by its own crew. Going on board they recover the ship's log, which reveals the crew all perished from an unknown tropical disease. They also bring back a bottle of vodka, which is rather foolishly swigged-on by two of the crew. Needless to say it contains hidden monster ingredients, and before too long these unfortunates have mutated into slimy, THING-like Stan Winston creatures who are out for their crewmates' blood.

You can see that some money has been spent here. The sets are handsome, there's some terrific widescreen photography (which loses a lot of its impact on video) and an eerie, effective score by Jerry Goldsmith. Unfortunately all this is just window dressing for a predictable 'B' movie script peopled with stock characters. Strangely enough the supporting players are more interesting than the three leads (Weller is miscast, Richard Crenna is dull as the ship's doctor, and Amanda Pays proves it IS possible for there to be a worse British actress starring in Hollywood productions than Rachel Ward). LEVIATHAN is fun on an old-fashioned monster movie level, but it's unlikely to satisfy real genre buffs

Certificate 18. Running Time: 98 minutes.
N.T.

This is what they mean by a sticky end!





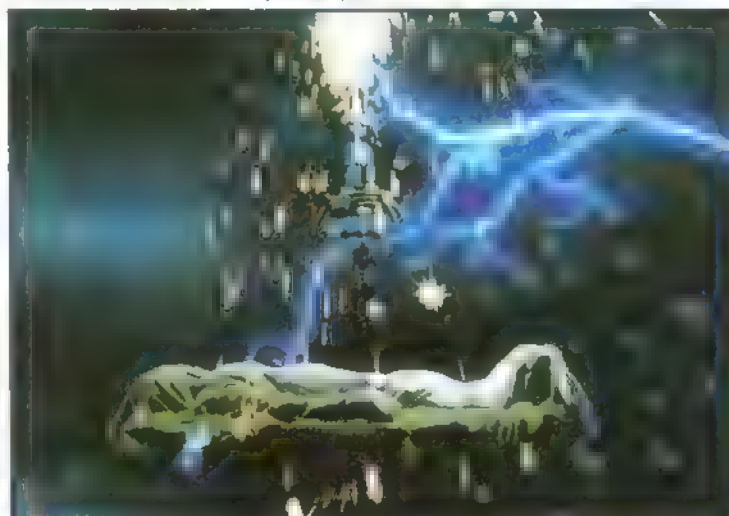
FRANKENHOOKER

Medusa Home Video
Released 17th October

The Frankenstein legend gets well and truly stitched up in Frank (BASKET CASE) Henenlotter's latest exercise in the horror/absurd. Dr Jeffrey Franken (James Lorinz) is extremely cut up when his girlfriend Elizabeth 'goes to pieces' in a lawnmower accident. So he collects her severed head, pops it in a fishbowl, and goes off to select some choice female spare parts to go with it. To this end he gathers together a bunch of hotcha 42nd Street hookers, offering them the chance to try out a literally explosive new super-drug (these gals don't know the meaning of 'just say no', - and before long their various bits and pieces are scattered everywhere). As a major thunderstorm approaches New Jersey, our hero rushes home to assemble a new Elizabeth. In true Frankenstein fashion he raises the operating table to the roof of his garage, where lightning strikes twice, and then some. But when the table descends, Jeffrey discovers to his horror that the re-animated Elizabeth has become 'Frankenhooker', a creature with purple hair and matching mini-skirt, tube top and clutch purse who greets her creator with an offer of a date and a request for money. When he tries to reason with her, she decks him and stalks off into the



'This is the last time a buy a body from MFI'



FRANKENHOOKER should go down a storm on video.

night on her platform heels, intending to turn some tricks that will literally make her clients' heads spin...

More reminiscent of the 50s 'Z' classic, THE BRAIN THAT WOULDN'T DIE than any previous Frankenstein flick, this is good, sleazy fun that finds Henenlotter indulging his familiar obsessions with trashy women, hallucinatory drugs, 42nd Street, and bad horror movies. Former PENTHOUSE centrefold Patty Mullen is great as the wild child of the graveyard, and James Lorinz (of STREET TRASH) makes a splendidly deadpan Franken. Shot

back-to-back with BASKET CASE 2 on a modest \$1.5 budget, the movie boasts some great effects (the exploding hookers scene is a classic) and has an appealing B' movie en-

ergy about it that makes up for the lack of genuine wit in the director's own screenplay. One thing's for sure: Mary Shelley would not be amused

Certificate 18. Running Time: 81 minutes.
N.T.

OUTCAST

New World Video
Released 24th October
**½

This movie opens with a quote from Revelations, but it hardly offers anything new. Henry (John Tench) is a geeky kid who gets beaten up by everyone in sight, is shot in the leg by his brutal dad, turns alcoholic, is thrown in prison for robbery, and generally doesn't get much fun out of life. Then one day he meets up with a mysterious drifter (Peter Read) who speaks like he has an echo chamber round his head. The drifter tells him, 'You lack a positive self-image, Henry', and tattoos our hero with three sixes and a goat's head. He goes on to explain that Henry is 'The Herald of the New Order', and that in keeping with his new position of aspiring Anti-Christ, Henry should work weights, give up the booze, steal a Porsche, and start dressing like a MIAMI VICE pimp. This accomplished, he embarks upon an orgy of supernatural revenge, causing his dad to sit on a chainsaw and a criminal pal to swallow his own flick knife. He also picks up sleazy women and slaps them around a lot. But the big drawback here is that under the terms

of his contract he is not allowed to create life, only to take it away. So when one of these women gets pregnant by him, there's the devil to pay. This is thoroughly routine stuff, edited in a piecemeal fashion but featuring some reasonable gore effects including the popular old 'hand-in-a-blender routine'.

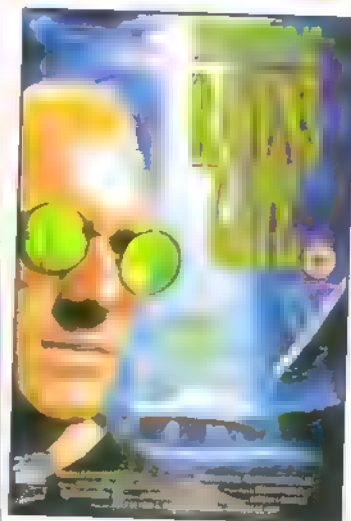
Certificate 18. Running Time: 94 minutes.
R.M.

ENCOUNTER AT RAVEN'S GATE

Castle Home Video
Released 25th October
**

Something strange is happening at Raven's Gate in the Australian outback. Cars start and stop without warning, electric power comes and goes, cassettes play the wrong music, a strange, burnt circle appears on the ground, and people begin to disappear mysteriously. Yes, it's the dark side of CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, done on such a low budget that the filmmakers can't actually afford to show us the alien invaders. Instead we get an endless series of bizarre occurrences interspersed with a soap-opera style story about the tangled lives of the locals. The rebellious hero (Steven Vidler) is having an affair with his brother's wife, while the town cop seems to be obsessed with LA TRAVIATA and a buxom barmaid in equal measure. They all get caught up in the UFOria in the end, of course. Director Rolf De Heer is right on the button as far as the atmospherics of the piece are concerned, and some of the special effects - featuring exploding doors and scrambled electronics - are impressive. But the script is annoyingly obtuse, hinting at government cover-ups, but chickening out of all explanations with a fashionably puzzling final scene. On the whole the film is all buildup to a conclusion that's flatter than Twiggy's chest.

Certificate 15. Running Time: 85 minutes.
R.M.





MALEDICTION

CIC Video

Released 5th October

**

There's a lot of bad karma out there' says a character in this dreomy witchcraft tale. There's a lot of bad acting, too, because this is another genre entry from the infamous Bert I. Gordon, the Mr B.I.G. who gave us such 50s classics as THE AMAZING COLOSSAL MAN and THE SPIDER. Here he wisely leaves the special effects to others and concentrates on telling a sleazy tale of a down and out ex-cop (played in the manner born by Robert Forster) whose search for a teen runaway brings him into contact with a black magic cult run by the very sexy Lydie Denier. The film has a good eye for Hollywood sleaze - most of it seems to take place in neon-lit bars with strippers doing their stuff in the background. Gordon also throws in some gratuitous lesbian love scenes, and the censor has removed one over-the-top moment where a girl is dragged from a car, stripped naked, and has her stomach sliced open! Plot and characterisation are bottom of the 'B' movie barrel, but there's enough going on in the way of car chases, shootouts, sub-Exorcist possession scenes

and general erotic mayhem to keep you watching right up to the final scenes where the delightful Miss Denier (I'm just a bad girl') gets dunked in a swimming pool and emerges a stringy-haired demon with a

face like last week's lunch. Perhaps Bert hasn't come so far after all

Certificate 15. Running Time: 88 minutes.

A.D.

BRAIN DEAD

MGM/UA Video

Released 5th October

**

'Here's a real oddity. This weird little science-fiction thriller comes from an idea originally dreamed up in 1962 by respected genre author Charles Beaumont for a TWILIGHT ZONE episode that was never produced. The story has SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW star Bill Pullman playing scientist Rex Martin, a man who studies the preserved brains of paranoids and schizophrenics looking for deformities that might be corrected with brain surgery. He gets a

chance to test his controversial lab theories when the sinister government corporation for which he works order him to operate on Dr Halsey (But Corr) a brilliant physicist who has murdered his wife and children. Halsey's mind contains a mathematical formula which the corporation want desperately to get their hands on. But before Martin can perform the operation he is knocked over by a car and suffers head injuries, joining Halsey in a bizarre surrealistic netherworld populated by 'Monsters of the Id.' The key to the piece seems to be that old cliché, 'Just because you're paranoid, it doesn't mean they aren't out to get you.' But if you can work out what the second half of this movie is about, then you've obviously got a better brain in your head than I.

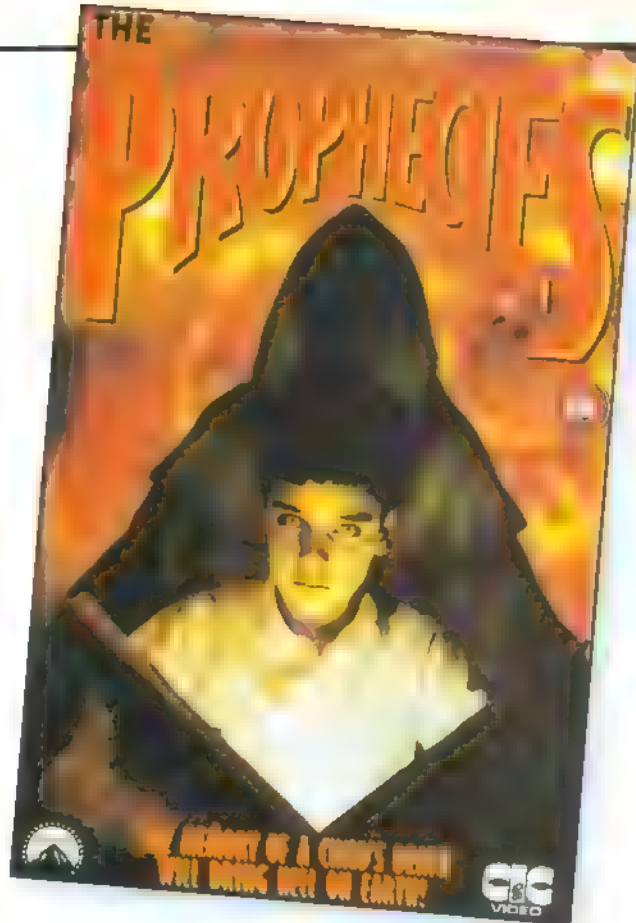
Certificate 15. Running Time: 88 minutes.

R.M.



BRAIN DEAD This was NOT what I meant when I asked for a face-lift!





PROPHECIES

CIC Video

Released 19th October

*

Shot as the two-hour opening episode for the third FRIDAY THE 13TH television series (though it doesn't announce the connection on the video jacket), this bland supernatural chiller is set largely in the French village of Marie Mere, a Lourdes-type holy place that comes under attack from the forces of Satan. The evil Astaroth (Fritz Weaver), has got his long-fingernailed hands on the Book Of Lucifer and is preparing to unleash the six prophecies that will allow Satan to rule the world. In order to fulfil these prophecies he needs to corrupt innocence, and his chosen targets are Sister Adele, a young nun who has had visions of the Virgin Mary, and a 12-year-old crippled girl who has travelled to Marie Mere in search

of a cure. Forget the 18 certificate, this is very mild stuff indeed. In fact there is no gore on offer at all, nor any decent scares. What we get instead is lashings of spooky music accompanying endless close-ups of possessed folks going bug-eyed and climbing the walls. I almost joined them. It's all extremely boring and badly written, and capped by one of the most stupid, sickeningly sentimental climaxes in living memory. To the devil with it!

Certificate 18. Running Time: 98 minutes.

N.T.

THE PEACEMAKER

Medusa Home Video

Released 17th October

**1/2

In the opening scenes of this action-packed science-fiction thriller, a bunch of L.A. cops dis-

cover the film's hero (Lance Edwards) trying to break into a squad car, and after a hectic chase involving much crashing through windows they manage to pump 20 bullets into him and bring him down. 'I think we just killed Clark Kent' jokes one of the cops as they cart the body off to the morgue. But just as lady pathologist Hilary Shepherd is about to start slicing, the wounds miraculously heal before her eyes and the suddenly rejuvenated 'corpse' takes her hostage, explaining that his name is Townsend, and he is a 'Peacemaker', a lawman from another galaxy, on the trail of Yates (Robert Forster), a sadistic extra-terrestrial serial killer...

She agrees to help him in his quest, and those of you who have seen THE HIDDEN and THE TERMINATOR will know more or less exactly what to expect from there on in (though in a neat twist the movie manages to keep you guessing right through as to which one of the aliens really is the bad guy). Pacily directed by Kevin S. Tenney (who did WITCHBOARD and NIGHT OF THE DEMONS), this is a made-for-video movie that should have had a theatrical release. The effects are good, if sparingly used, the performances have zest, and the dialogue is threaded with enough



'Do you feel lucky?'

welcome humour to offset the expected clichés. Fans of slambang action certainly get their moneysworth because the picture is heavily punctuated with well-shot stunt chases - just check out the army of stunt players on the end credits. Formula stuff maybe, but very smartly done.

Certificate 18. Running Time: 87 minutes.

R.M.

PROM NIGHT 3: THE LAST KISS

CBS Fox Video

Released 27th October

**

Spooky 50s prom queen Mary Lou Maloney is back (she made her debut in 1987's HELLO MARY LOU PROM NIGHT II) to wreak

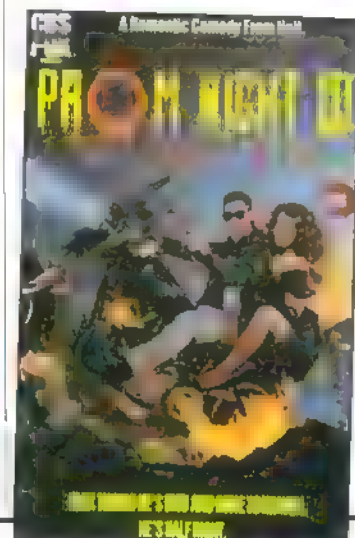


Mary Lou serves some I-scream...

more havoc among the students of Hamilton High. This time out she's played by Courtney Taylor instead of Lisa Schrage (the latter having embarked on a successful fashion modelling career), and the accent is more on chuckles than chills. The light-hearted storyline has student Tim Conlon becoming the object of the ghostly Mary Lou's affections and receiving quite a boost in social status as she bumps off anyone who antagonises him. But what happens when he gets fed up with her and wants to start dating living females? As always, the murders are the best part of the show: a meddlesome guidance counsellor is given a face-bath in battery acid, a bullying football player is skewered to the goalpost, and a teacher who passes out an 'F' grade to our hero becomes a human tut-tut-tut. His hands are pinned to the desk with ice-cream cones a whisk is shoved through his face and his mutilated body is filled with fruit salad! All of this is done in the best possible taste of course. The movie is fairly entertaining, but it doesn't really work as a black comedy because the humour is so infantile, the biggest groaners ranging from the frequent M*A*S*H type announcements over the school tannoy, to director Ron Oliver's self-indulgent cameo as a 50s sex-education doctor in 'Social Diseases,' a daft film screened for one of the classes. Enough, already.

Certificate 18. Running Time: 95 minutes.

A.B.



THE PEACEMAKER: Robert Forster gets all burned up.



RELENTLESS

**Warner Home Video
Released 5th October**

Erstwhile Brat Packer Judd Nelson gives a dire performance as a crazed serial killer in this eminently forgettable grade B' thriller. Nelson plays the son of a Los Angeles supercop who has been trained as a child to be as tough as his dear old dad. Now the force won't have him because he's obviously a few sandwiches short of a picnic, so to purge himself of his feelings of worthlessness, Nelson plans to commit a series of brutal murders which will baffle the cops. His modus operandi is to call his victims up on the phone beforehand and explain that he is coming round to murder them - conveniently giving them time to make funeral arrangements. At each murder scene he leaves a page from the telephone book with a cryptic message scrawled on it, because deep down he really wants to be caught and punished for his crimes. Enter two homicide cops straight out of the cliché cupboard: the world-weary L.A. veteran (Robert Loggia in a fair reprise of the character he played in JAGGED EDGE), and a keen, newly-promoted youngster (Leo Rossi). As they get closer to uncovering the truth, Nelson circles Loggia's name in the phone book, and puts Rossi's wife and child at the top of his list of potential victims...

Though this was directed by notorious exploitation filmmaker William (MANIAC) Lustig, it's remarkably short on gory incident. The murders are short, sharp and largely bloodless, which is a minus, really, because films like this need some extreme violence to bind them together. Rossi and Loggia acquit themselves admirably, but Nelson's villain, whose performance consists of sweating a lot, rolling his eyes, and lurching at the camera, is so one-dimensional that most viewers won't even dislike him enough to care



Honey, I outstared the dog

whether he gets caught or not. Relentless is right, relentlessly dull!

Certificate 18. Running Time: 86 minutes.
N.T.

HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS

**Buena Vista Video
Released 8th October**

***1/2

This completely charming Disney fantasy/comedy stars Rick Moranis as a nutty inventor who is trying - without much luck - to build a machine that can shrink living things. One day Moranis is out at a science conference and an

accident causes the machine to actually start working, reducing his and the next door neighbours' kids to the size of ants. When he returns he doesn't realise what has happened, sweeps the four kids up with the garbage, and deposits the bag at the bottom of the garden. The kids manage to escape before the dustman comes, but to get safely home they must make a long and hazardous trek through what looks like the Amazon jungle. Whoops! - watch out for that lawn mower!

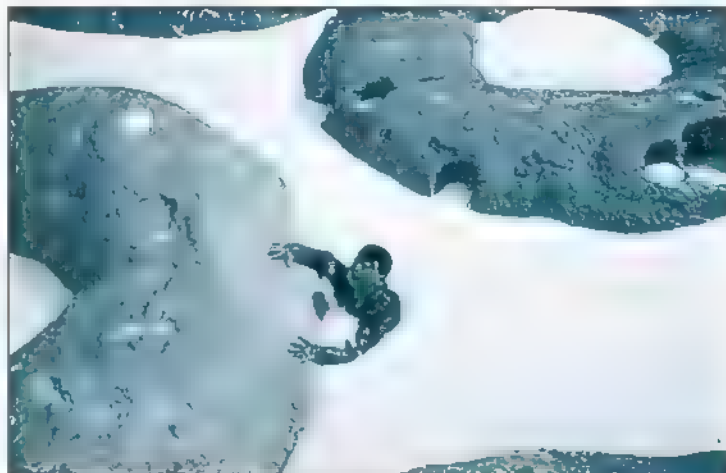
Stuart (RE-ANIMATOR) Gordon came up with the story idea, and the film was originally to have been directed by him as well, but conflict with the studio led to him being replaced by special effects ace Joe Johnston,

who does a fine job in his directorial debut. Not only does Johnston show great skill in handling the camera trickery, he also manages to coax outstanding performances from every member of the cast, and keeps the narrative moving in a fast-paced manner.

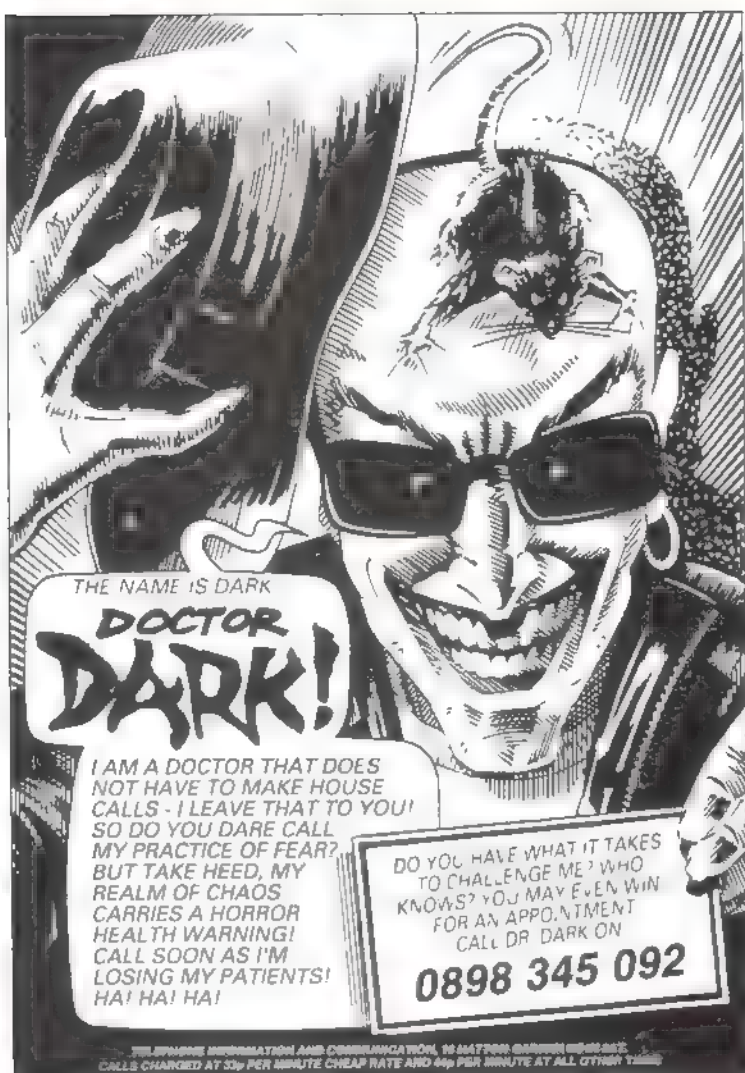
Recalling some of Disney's past greats (like THE ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR) in more than just concept, the film espouses old-fashioned values of decency between its action sequences, showing characters who initially dislike and mistrust each other pulling together in a time of crisis. While some may find the film a mite corny, at least it's enjoyably positive and upbeat. Messages aside, it's also a rollicking good adventure yarn, with enough terrific effects sequences to satisfy kids of all ages. The film was made on a lower budget than you might think, and that's why, for example, our shrunken adventurers only encounter a couple of Harryhausen-type stop-motion creatures: a scorpion and a friendly ant. Good things really do come in small packages.

Certificate U. Running Time: 90 minutes.
R.M.

Portrait of a cereal killer



This month's reviewers are Norman Taylor, Allan Bryce, and Richard Marshall.



THE NAME IS DARK
DOCTOR DARK!

I AM A DOCTOR THAT DOES NOT HAVE TO MAKE HOUSE CALLS - I LEAVE THAT TO YOU! SO DO YOU DARE CALL MY PRACTICE OF FEAR? BUT TAKE HEED, MY REALM OF CHAOS CARRIES A HORROR HEALTH WARNING! CALL SOON AS I'M LOSING MY PATIENTS! HA! HA! HA!

DO YOU HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO CHALLENGE ME? WHO KNOWS? YOU MAY EVEN WIN FOR AN APPOINTMENT CALL DR DARK ON
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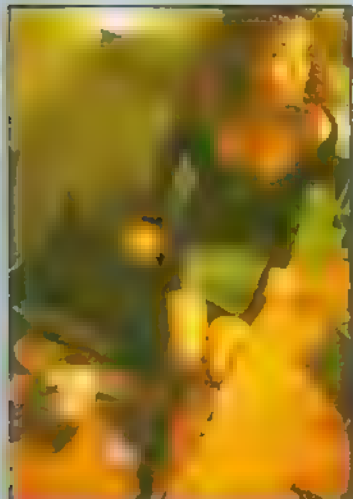


CINEMACABRE

Baty bloodsuckers, UFOs, feminist SF – it's all in a day's work for movie columnist Alan Frank.

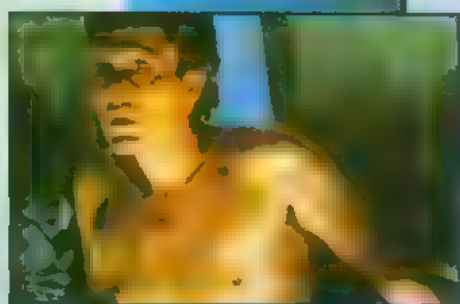
Speaking as a writer. I was somewhat surprised by *Vampire's Kiss* since, in a wild break with tradition, the literary agent played by Nicolas Cage did not turn out to be the deadly bloodsucker. That honour (and in the context of this abysmal effort, it's a dubious one), belongs to Jennifer Beals. Picked up by Cage for a one-night stand, she goes further than you might expect on a first date, baring her fangs and giving him a bite in the neck, which is hardly what Cage was expecting. Necking, yes – but this is really taking things too far!

This close encounter of the dental kind causes Cage to go quite bats and develop a nasty craving for blood. Or does he? The movie is so ill-written that it's hard to tell if Cage has become a vampire or simply a bloody psychotic given to



This is not what I meant by a seat in the stalls!

rape, murder, pleading for people to kill him and, just to vary his life a bit, giving his secretary Maria Conchita Alonso a really bad time. My guess, for what it is worth, is that poor Cage was infected by Joseph Minion's confused and confusing screenplay and just didn't know what he was doing. About the only thing certain is that he overacts abominably, going so far over the top that it would need the combined technology of NASA and Jodrell Bank to track his spacewards trajectory. It's a truly unique (and I don't mean that as praise) performance which makes his thick and fatty slice of ham in *Wild At Heart* look like underplaying.



COMMUNION: Christopher Walken keeps watching the skies.

Beals, on the other hand, does what she has always done and doesn't act at all, Miss Alonso should look for a new agent and Elizabeth Ashley, as Cage's understandably confused psychiatrist, is so far out on a limb that I strongly doubt she could see the tree at all. *Vampire's Kiss* doesn't know where it is going. Unless it's raining hard and the cinema is the only place you can shelter, deck yourself out with garlic, holy water and crucifixes and hope they'll be enough to protect you from having to see it.

Communion is a real oddity.

Whitley Strieber's story of his bizarre alien encounters was a best-seller and his screen adaptation is nothing if not sincere. Clearly he believes that he and (as it turns out by the end of the movie) other Americans have had the kind of close encounters of the strange kind which are meat and drink to the movies. The problem here is that if you are a non-believer then what is shown on the screen lacks the kind of imagination to make it credible.

The aliens themselves either resemble black-hooded monks who

have been left out in the rain and shrunk, or cousins of the extraterrestrials which turned up, equally unconvincingly, at the climax of *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*. On the page Strieber's experiences might have worked, but film is too graphic a medium for the kind of complicity that grows between a writer and a dedicated, "I-want-to-believe" reader.

Director Philippe Mora does what he can with Strieber's script which focusses on his celluloid alter ego Christopher Walken who (having seen the little people) develops writer's block and puts his marriage to Lindsay Crouse under strain. The film isn't badly directed – in fact, in view of a clearly-less-than-epic-budget, some of the special effects set-pieces come off rather well – but it seems longer than it really is, and often rather tedious. The burden of the acting falls on Walken who – on the evidence of his increasingly irritating mannerisms and method intensity – would have ended up in a strait-jacket rather than writing a best-seller. Still, I did say it's an oddity and, as such, it passed the time fairly painlessly without, unfortunately, ever convincing me.

Whatever it's makers may claim I thought *The Handmaid's Tale* was as strong a piece of feminist



VAMPIRE'S KISS: Cage plays for high stakes.

science fiction as I've seen in mainstream cinema. The setting is a future totalitarian state (clearly America) where Natasha Richardson is rounded up by the authorities following the death of her husband in an escape attempt. After training she is sent to work as a "handmaid" for high level security chief Robert Duvall and his wife Faye Dunaway. There her job is to provide the couple with the child that barren Dunaway is unable to have. Her "seduction" by Duvall, in a strange threesome with Dunaway, is a chilling piece of filmmaking by director Volker Schlöndorff and the most impressive thing in a movie which creates a cold and credible future that makes 1984 seem quite attractive by comparison. But it never involves you emotionally in the plight of its heroine or, indeed, in spite of good performances by Richardson, McGovern and, especially, Duvall, makes you feel that it is anything more than an accomplished but clinical melodrama. Harold Pinter's screenplay is efficient rather than involving and so is the film as a whole. I have to say that every scene in which Dunaway appears rapidly loses its dramatic momentum because of a performance that is not so much bad as simply non-existent. I was impressed by the

crowd scenes which are superbly staged by Schlöndorff, by the first rate production design and cinematography, and by Ryuichi Sakamoto's eerie score, but overall I was left unmoved by a movie whose theme of the exploitation of women should have had a powerful effect.

The Exorcist meets *Airplane!* in *Repossessed* and, until the over-long televised exorcism that climaxes the movie, the near non-stop barrage of zany verbal and visual gags created by writer-director Bob Logan made me laugh a great deal. Leslie Nielsen provides another splendidly funny po-faced characterisation as the kind of exorcist who would give the Devil a bad name. Linda Blair vomits copious amounts of split-pea soup in the polished, professional manner you would expect from someone whose career was built on such liquid dexterity, and Ned Beatty (who appeared in *Exorcist II: The Heretic*) turns in an entertainingly loony performance as a smarmy television evangelist. It hardly qualifies as a satire on *The Exorcist* - the humour is too broad and farcical for that. But if you fancy a stew liberally laced with supernatural *Hellzapoppin'*-style anything-goes comedy, much of it very black and deliciously tasteless



Bible salesman Ned Beatty picked the wrong client this time!

(the Teddy Kennedy joke deserves to be in every anthology of bad-taste humour) you could do a lot worse. I certainly enjoyed myself

watching a movie with no message and no apparent ambition other than to make people laugh - which is not a bad thing these days.

THE EXORCIST III

USA 1990

Dir & Scr: William Peter Blatty

With: George C. Scott, Ed Flanders, Brad Dourif, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, Scott Wilson. 20th Century Fox.

What, no subtitle? Well, if Fox decide to inaugurate one for video I'll vote for 'The Hammer'...

What we have here is an interesting anomaly: an essentially pointless sequel (it neither adds nor subtracts from the abysmal first part - let's um, forget *THE HERETIC*, shall we?) which actually succeeds admirably as a tremendously entertaining big budget absurdity. Were it not for the rather hilarious last minute exorcism this would be a slick, meaningless slasher movie, notable mainly for George C. Scott's outrageous mugging - his portrayal of Patton appears restrained in comparison.

Obviously not satisfied with the cavalcade of maniacs he created for *THE NINTH CONFIGURATION*, writer/director Blatty saturates his characters in dementia, senility, disease, paranoia, stupidity or general tendencies towards freakishness and eyeball-rolling. Scott excels in all these categories, chewing up the scenery, bellowing, wheezing, blustering, weeping, ranting and raving (his final "I believe in slime" monologue is a gem) fit to beat



Exorcist III - our anti-hero the bleeding

the devil. Or not, in this case, as it's up to Nicol Williamson to deliver us from old Scratch in a series of scenes which bear more than a trace of last min-

ute editing, having no connection with the main 'narrative'.

Speaking of which, the 'plot' concerns Scott's attempts to apprehend a serial murderer

who is actually the same as that of the notorious *Hammer* Killer from fifteen years previous. After disposing of a couple of characters peripherally connected to *THE EXORCIST* (none of whom is Linda Blair, so cool to the killer shifts his base of operations to the local hospital, facilitating a few incredibly contrived plot twists...

Blatty's direction is bizarrely overly portentous and constantly striving for atmosphere in place of logic or continuity, charged with enough hubris to believe that exorcism *per se* was in fact peripheral to his film... This attitude manifests itself particularly at the climax, where the devil (or whomever he may be) is vanquished not easily one wonders what all the fuss was about in the first *EXORCIST* atrocity, where poor old Linda Blair condemned herself to an eternity of abysmal acting roles...

It is, however, misleading for the potential viewer to take note of all (or indeed any) of these criticisms. *THE EXORCIST III* may sport a classic case of dry rot beneath its veneer, but who really cares? For major studio horror trash it's far above average; there are some good scares, a ridiculous gore scene, and it's never boring; which is more that I can say about the film which started the ball rolling (the bile-spilling?), an overrated time-waster if ever there was - but that's another story...

FLATLINERS

Starring: Kiefer Sutherland, Julian Roberts, Kevin Bacon, Oliver Platt, Kimberly Scott, Robin Rudey
Written by: Peter Filardi

Already dubbed St. Elmo's Fire in Hollywood media, Schumacher's new fantasy, **FLATLINERS** boasts a fascinating and provocative high-concept that the film consistently fails to deliver on.

Feeling that his generation has missed out on all of mankind's greatest discoveries, Nelson (Sutherland) leads a group of five irritatingly good-looking medical students (cowardly Oliver Platt is the only gross anatomy amongst them) on a quest to the Other Side. By 'flatlining'—shutting down the brain and the heart so EEG and EKG monitors show no signs of life—and then relying on the rest of

the team to bring them back to life, Nelson and friends get to spend some time exploring death and ultimately unravel the meaning of life. Unfortunately, all does not go according to plan and, before they realise what they have done, four of the five have each bought back a personal demon that haunts them in the real world.

The main problem with **FLATLINERS** is that it simply refuses to be scary. The spooky manifestations of sins from the students' past, never appear to be that much of a threat (these kids are only 22 as it is, what could they have done that's so terrible? Answer: nothing).

But he warned, this stuff is not for the squeamish. While at school, Labraccio (Bacon) haunted a young coloured girl in the playground. Now she's back, calling him names on a subway train (oosh, scary!). And get this one, fright fan Joe (Baldwin) has been secretly videotaping his lovemaking ses-



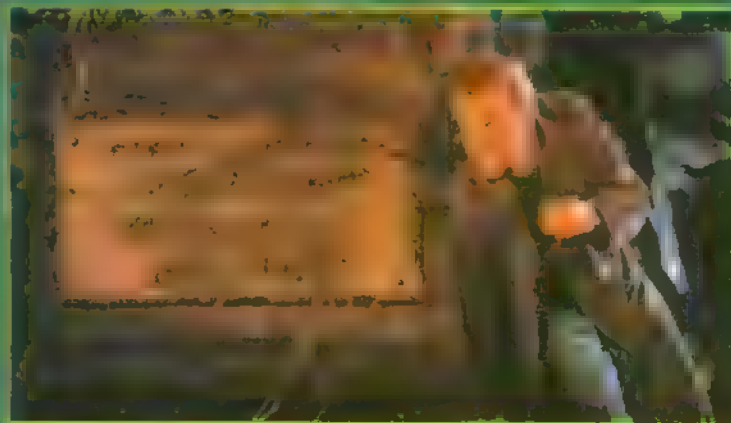
Can flatline?

sions with young co-eds. Now his string of beautiful lovers are hanging around his apartment making suggestive comments. Only Nelson himself is physically threatened, by a malicious pre-teen named Billy Hakoney (Rudey).

Part of what makes **FLATLINERS** so wearisome is its over-rich visual style. Cinematographer Jan De Bont gets himself so worked up that half the time it's impossible to concentrate on a line of dialogue without the screen being bathed in golden hues, the camera spinning 360 degrees or smoke drifting aimlessly across the screen (in fact, there's so much smoke in this film I'm surprised the BBFC didn't slap a Government Health Warning on it instead of a 15 certifi-

cate). De Bont's attention-grabbing, "I've-been-reading-American Cinematographer-since-I-was-in-diapers" attitude just leaves you feeling nauseous and blindfolded. Conversely, the death scenes, which should be visual high points, turn out to be the perfect moments for nipping out to the toilets. I hate to use the boring old cliché that they look like MTV rock videos or perfume ads, but they all do.

FLATLINERS had the potential for some slick chills coupled with a toothsome, high-tech rubbery, fantastical. It now displays none of these vital signs. Blame that on a director with no feel for the genre (remember *The Lost Boys*?) and a major studio seeking a big



Is there life after, John Hughes movies?

DARKMAN

Starring: Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Larry Drake, Colin Friels, Nelson Mahita, Jesse Lawrence Ferguson

Written by: Chuck Pfarrer, Sam Raimi, Ivan Raimi, Daniel Goldline, Joshua Goldin

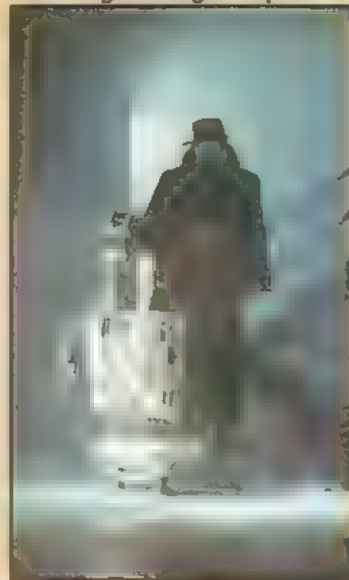
There's a shot early on in **DARKMAN** that hints at what 30-year-old director Sam Raimi's debut picture for a major studio could have been. Julie Hastings (Frances McDormand) stands in the street, looking up at the apartment-cum-laboratory she shares with Liam Neeson (who plays Peyton Westlake and, later, the titular hero), the man she has just decided to marry. With the LA skyline in the background, Julie looks on in shock as the building explodes in a ball of fire, obliterating her home, her husband-to-be and her future. Suddenly, the background behind her changes and the audience is looking at Julie, same

expression of horror and bewilderment, in the cemetery where she is attending Westlake's funeral. It's an audacious, brilliant moment and **DARKMAN** could have done with a few more like it. It's also, ironically, a shot which Universal Pictures wanted removed from the final cut, but thanks to Raimi's doggedness, it survives as a testament to the film that should have been.

That's not to say that **DARKMAN** is a disaster. It's a more-than-efficient revenge thriller pitting a Phantom Of The Opera-style hero against the gang of mobsters who ruined his face and his life. There's a dash of romance and tragedy (clumsily handled) thrown in as well as the hideously scarred Westlake attempts to woo back his fickle ex-girlfriend, wearing a mask of his former face which dissolves after 100 minutes. But, for a script worked on by five people, including Raimi himself, and which borrows liberally from such rich sources as

the aforementioned Phantom, Franju's *Les Yeux Sans Visage*, *RoboCop* and *Batman*, there's precious little to hold the attention and you can literally see the film, like Westlake's masks, melting away to a sticky

Raimi's great fright hope.



mess during its own 100 minutes.

DARKMAN is a competent Hollywood movie. Depressingly so. Anyone expecting the youthful exuberance of Raimi's *Evil Dead* movies (or even the fabulously flawed *Crimewave*) will be severely disappointed. At a time when unproven directors (Renny Harlin, Stephen Hopkins) can helm such mammoth productions as *Die Hard 2* and *Predator 2*, one can only wonder what the future holds for the, by comparison to those two, awesomely talented Raimi. It's probably a wise idea that he's staying in shape by returning to low-budget constraints with *Evil Dead 3*. The malaise caused by big-budget has already proven to be a stumbling block for once-promising directors such as Paul Verhoeven, and **DARKMAN**, even with the entertainment it provides on occasion, shows that the rot may already be setting in on one of the genre's great white hopes.

David Cox

OUTER LIMITS

PART 2 EPISODE GUIDE

By Jon Abbott

BSB have been showing *The Outer Limits* in the order they were originally screened by ABC, and the sequence in which most episode guides list the shows. One historical perspective is as good as another, and this is an anthology series without recurring characters and weekly continuity after all, so there'll be no complaint from me (especially as I've already berated them in a trade press article for running other series out of sequence). It's good to see BSB making an effort instead of just slinging episodes out at random. For purists though, our episode guide lists the episodes in the order they were made. Daystar always had five episodes on the go at any one time in various stages of production, moving them along conveyor-belt style from commission and pre-production to editing and broadcast. Unusually, I've included a critical assessment and trivia rather than straight giveaway plot-lines for these unique productions and here they are...

The Galaxy Being

wr. and dir. Leslie Stevens.
The superb plot that sold the series, see feature for further details. Cliff Robertson stars as a radio ham who makes contact with an otherworldly counterpart. With Jacqueline Scott, Lee Phillips (almost cast in the lead), and me William Douglas Jr. as the Andromedan.

The Borderland

wr. and dir. Leslie Stevens.
Although it degenerates into little more than a salvo of crashing and thrashing special effects, the premise is fascinating - two scientists have found a dimensional doorway to what may be the after-life, and a wealthy industrialist offers to fund their attempts to open the door to it if they will seek out his dead son. Comic book aficionados may spot striking parallels with the memorable Negative Zone stories in *Fantastic Four* during the '60's, most notably issue no. 62 when their leader was stranded in the reverse dimension. With Mark Richman. Nina Foch, Gladys Cooper, Alfred Ryder, Richman is remembered by SF buffs as the reluctant ally of David Vincent in a superb *Invaders* episode "The Leeches". Ryder guested often in *The Invaders* and *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*.

The Human Factor

wr. David Duncan, dir. Abner Biberman.
A psychiatrist and his psychotic patient exchange bodies at an isolated Arctic outpost. Somewhat reminiscent of *The Thing From Another World* but writer Duncan wrote the George Pal

feature *The Time Machine* from which some of the plot's sound effects were swiped, as well as *The Thing That Couldn't Die*, *The Black Scorpion*, and Jack Arnold's rarely seen *Monster On The Campus*. In this episode, Harry Guardino, Gary Merrill, Joe de Santis, Sally Kellerman, James Sikking, and William Douglas Jr. as "the ghost" (which later shows up as the creature in the *Star Trek* episode "The Man Trap"). Gary Merrill was the senator who tried to close down *The Time Tunnel* in the series of the same name.

Tourist Attraction

wr. Dean Reisner, dir. Laslo Benedek.
Lumbering monsters in a lumbering swipe of Jack Arnold's *Creature From The Black Lagoon*. The only saving grace is Henry

Silva's superbly wicked tyrant Mercurio. No only was this episode an aesthetic disaster, it was a financial one too, coming in as the most expensive episode made. For the full glorious story behind this fiasco, consult David Schow's and Jeffrey Frentzen's indispensable *Outer Limits Companion* published by Ace (and avoid those dreadful "Files" books!). As entertaining as any typical, low-budget B-feature.

The Architects Of Fear

wr. Meyer Dolinsky, dir. Byron Haskin.
At last - this is what *The Outer Limits* was all about. Robert Culp, star of *I Spy* and *Greatest American Hero*, in the first of three virtuoso performances as a scientist who asks the question "why spoil it?" Like *The Galaxy Being*, it's a classy variation on *The Day The Earth Stood Still* with a touch of tortured monster of the *Frankenstein/Elephant Man* variety thrown in for good measure. Sure, no introduction is needed to Byron Haskin, collaborator with

George Pal on *War Of The Worlds* and *The Power*, director of *Conquest Of Space*, *From Earth To The Moon*, *Captain Sinbad*, *Robinson Crusoe On Mars*, advisor on "The Cage", etc... Veteran monster man (and maker) Janos Prohaska makes the first of many *Outer Limits* appearances as the monster.

Controlled Experiment

wr. and dir. Leslie Stevens.
Cheaper comedic episode cobbled together quickly in four days for peanuts to compensate for the "Tourist Attraction" debacle. Two aliens dissect an Earth murder with the aid of a machine that replays time. The performances save it; it's okay, but a bit of a let-down next to other first season episodes. With Barry Morse, Carroll O'Connor, Grace Lee Whitney.

Barry Morse was Bergman in *Space 1999*. Grace Lee Whitney was Yeoman Rand in *Star Trek*; Carroll O'Connor was the general who went back in time to join his military ancestor in "The Last Patrol" in *The Time Tunnel*.

The Hundred Days Of The Dragon

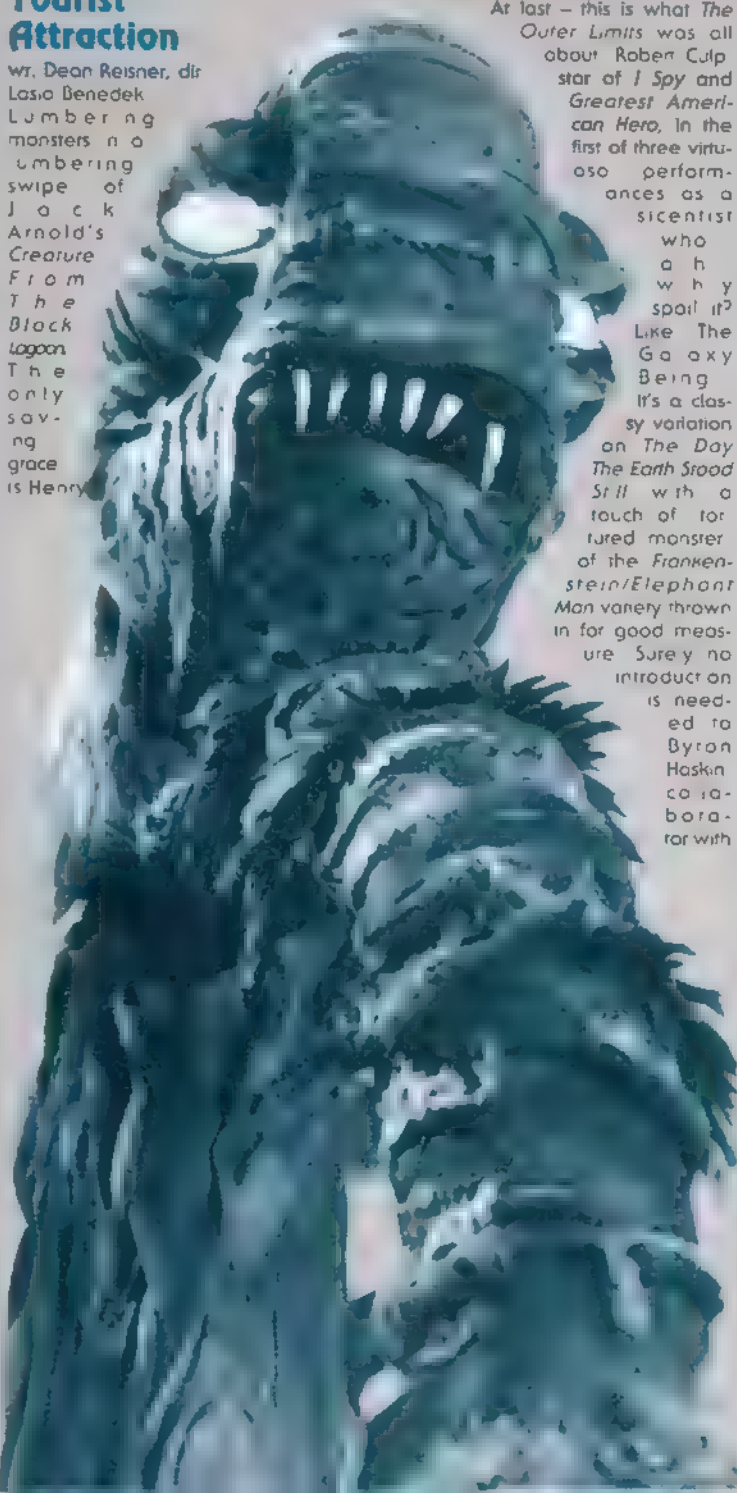
wr. Allan Balter, Robert Mintz, dir. Byron Haskin.
Cold War hysteria, *Outer Limits*' version of *Twilight Zone*'s "The Mirror", with a foreign spy changing his face to spend 100 days in the White House as the President! It was filmed and aired two months before the equally improbable killing of Robert F. Kennedy. Appropriately enough, writer Balter went on to write and story-edit for *Mission: Impossible*. With Sidney Blackmer, Philip Pine, Nancy Rennick, Joan Camden. Philip Pine was Surak in *Star Trek*'s "The Savage Curtain".

The Man With The Power

wr. Jerome Ross, dir. Laslo Benedek.
Donald Pleasance excels as a henpecked nobody who volunteers to participate in a scientific experiment and finds himself controlling a hideous, powerful electrical cloud that zaps those who have intimidated him.

A Feasibility Study

wr. Joseph Stefano, dir. Byron Haskin.
Powerful, poignant story of a town transported to another planet by hostile aliens for study. The final scenes in the church recall Haskin's similarly moving scenes in *War Of The Worlds*.



...be amused to learn
...alien is played by Brit-
...after the lead Nazi,
...Music. He couldn't fit
...though "a ready con-
...stant director Bob Just-
...ed more

Specimen: Unknown

Wt. Stephen Lord, dir. Gerd Oswald
...the first season demons
...ed early in the series and
...ients on the show re-
...ackneyed a yarn about
...thing plants one of their
...Guess what - It got the series
...ings. Appropriately enough
...episode riddled with '50's
...ature clichés and assump-
...eady over used plot was
...Day Of The Triffids) the
...s composed of an array of B-
...owards Trivia the space
...ion was a hand-me-down from
...Men Into Space, and the space-
...exterior became a hand-me-
...It was sold to the makers
...ight Zone for 'Probe Seven
...And Out'. As this Twilight Zone
...the second oddest sci-fi plot
...to humankind this prop has
...a dissnation! The episode also
...e short and then unknown
...Joanne Coeman was raped in
...a prologue that unfortunately
...suspense the episode might
...e had

The Sixth Finger

Wt. Ellis S. Joseph, dir. James Gold-
...one of the poorest to one of the
...est David McCallum, only months
...way from becoming a teen idol in
...Mon From UNCLE had the good
...fortune to star in two excellent Outer
...imits episodes, and gives a superb
...performance here as a bitter young
...iner who runs through the A to Z of
...evolution for a scientist who finds his
...reanon uncontrollable when McCal-
...um evolves into a man of the far
...future... huge-domed, six-fingered,
...athic super strong and venge-
...David Muhare (The Ghost And
...Muir Knight Rider) is competent
...the scientist; Prohaska's in the
...monkey suit

John Chambers, who provided
...the extraordinary make-up for McCal-
...um's transformation, should also
...need little introduction; best known
...for creating the ape make-up for the
...Planet Of The Apes series, his other
...work includes a superb non-stere-
...otypical Ontario guise for the great
...Robert Culp in his superlative I Spy
...episode The Overlord - an army of
...Smiths for Lost In Space epi-
...The Space Destroyers work-
...the magic for the masters of dis-
...se in Mission Impossible and Wild
...Wild West, and the first and only
...those of The Invaders in their true

The Man Who Was Never Born

Wt. Anthony Lawrence, dir. Leonard
...Another classic; a glorious romantic
...ole of time travel and tragedy with a
...ing melancholy close I'm not
...spoiling this one for you with a plot
...reapition, except to say that it's a
...familiar theme, realised beautifully
...Martin Landau of Mission Im-
...possible and (yuk) Space 1999 stars
...alongside Shirley Knight and John

Considine Director Horn was behind
...the camera for two other excellent
...Outer Limits, the notorious "The Zanti
...Misfits" and the lyrical "Children Of
...Spider County", as well as numerous
...Voyage/Sea and a superior Last In
...Space, "Invaders From The Fifth Di-
...mension".

Huanziane

Wt. William Bast, dir. Robert Florey
...Another one the creatives still laugh
...about with astronauts on the moon
...finding a luminous globe filled with
...alien life forms fleeing from others of
...their species. Lots of improbable mo-
...ments, and some hopelessly doted
...and phoney moon surface scenes
...Corny but cute

DOIT

Wt. Meyer Dolinsky, dir. Gerd Oswald
...Intelligent "Big Brother" parable, get-
...ting a few digs in at television itself
...along the way, but the scope is clearly
...greater. Oswald's directorial debut on

Nightmare

Wt. Joseph Stefano, dir. John Erman
...Martin Sheen's first acting job when he
...moved to Hollywood was this grim
...horror story of a platoon of soldiers
...terrorised beyond endurance by an
...alien menace that is knocking them
...off. Also a first for former Twilight Zone
...casting director John Erman, whose
...debut directing assignment this was.
...Also starring John Anderson, Ed Nel-
...son, James Shigeta. Watch for SF ver-
...eron Whit Bissell in a bit part as the
...inevitable military man (did he own
...that costume, or what?) The end re-
...sult was kind of like The Great Escape
...meets Southern Comfort by way of
...Aliens, Predator, etc

Corpus Earthling

Wt. Orin Borstein from Louis Charbon-
...neau, dir. Gerd Oswald
...Robert Culp climbing the walls again
...in an episode considered to be one
...of the scariest. Culp can hear rocks
...talking among themselves, but no-
...body believes him because when the



The Outer Limits was inauspicious, but
...he was able to redeem himself with
...his stylish effort employing clever visu-
...al tricks to subtly heighten the mood
...of suspicion, fear and paranoia. Un-
...like many 1984 clones, the people
...here actually realise their terrible er-
...ror which makes it all the more chill-
...ing and Oswald's efforts made him
...Stefano's golden boy and the third
...name, after Stevens and Stefano,
...most closely associated with making
...the series the triumph it was. Meyer
...Dolinsky wrote the dire "Plato's Step-
...children" for Star Trek; veteran actor
...and teacher Jeff Corey takes the lead,
...with Peter Breck of The Big Valley
...western series and character actor
...Harry Townes (Star Trek, Twilight
...Zone, The Invaders, and a surprisingly
...good Incredible Hulk two-parter, "The
...First" with Dick Durock amongst his
...other credits)

creatures emerge from the rocks they
...turn people into rather ragged look-
...ing zombies (and these aren't the
...cuddly ghouls we see in today's films,
...they're really rough, people!)

The Zanti Misfits

Wt. Joseph Stefano, dir. Leonard Horn.
...This is the episode everybody who
...ever saw the show remembers best,
...the one with those creepy crawly
...stop-motion rat-sized ants with de-
...monic little faces. Forget Arachnopho-
...bia - these little guys are disgusting!
...But behind the Corman-esqe crea-
...tures and B-movie scenario (square-
...jawed militia and sleazy no-goods
...are the protagonists), a nice twist and
...typical Outer Limits message lies.
...Robert F. Simon leads the armed
...forces (of course), Michael Tolan is our

wise speculating scientist and a
...young Bruce Dern (who starred in the
...SF feature Silent Running among
...many other 1970's movies) is the
...sleeze

It Crawled Out Of The Woodwork

Wt. Joseph Stefano, dir. Gerd Oswald
...Here's Schow and Frentzen: "At
...NORCO, a top security energy re-
...search facility tucked away in the San
...Fernando valley, a cleaning woman
...working the midnight shift finds a
...mysterious black dustball stuck against
...a baseboard, and when she sucks it
...into her vacuum cleaner, it amplifies
...into a strobing, chaotic cloud of lethal
...energy that instantly consumes her".
...Jh right. As you may have gath-
...ered, this one has to be seen to be
...believed a superb, grim, almost
...blackly comedic horror of gruesome
...death and destruction, with a ma-
...evolent energy cloud (not unlike that
...in "The Man With The Power") lurking
...at the end of a corridor and turning all
...humans it comes into contact with into
...enslaved living-dead zombies. Any-
...one who doesn't play ball gets an
...instant heart attack. And get a load of
...some of Stefano's dialogue - "Stuart
...Peters had scar tissue as fresh as
...tomorrow morning's milk. If he'd been
...in any better health, they would have
...given him a morning show on televi-
...sion". It's the sort of line that needs
...someone like Ed Asner to say it... and
...happily they've got him.

The Mice

Wt. Bill Ballinger, Joseph Stefano, dir.
...Alan Crosland Jr.
...A disgusting-looking slimy alien is the
...high point of this story, which also
...features Henry Silva saving grace of
..."Tourist Attraction". He plays a sly,
...energetic convict who volunteers as a
...guinea-pig (or "mouse") for the ex-
...periments of a bunch of dull, de-
...tached and naive scientists colabo-
...rating with deceitful hostile aliens

The Invisibles

Wt. Joseph Stefano, dir. Gerd Oswald
...Reminiscent of The Tangler and The
...Invaders, this is another of Stefano's
...gruesome zombie sagas, with a fabu-
...lous, flawless cast including Don Gor-
...don as the introvert selfish secret
...agent inner Spain George Macready
...Neil Hamilton (Batman's Commissioner
...Gordon Richard Dawson (recently
...seen in Schwarzenegger's The Run-
...ning Man), Dee Hartford (Verda of
...Lost In Space), and Walter Burke.
...Prolific TV director Tony Mardenie
...shows up as Plantetta, and watch for
...the government agent named Johnny
...to see Outer Limits monster man Wil-
...liam Douglas Jr. In human form. As
...usual in Stefano's dark horrors, the
...episode offers illuminating insights
...into the dark sides of the richly-drawn
...characters

LEAVE

Wt. Meyer Dolinsky, dir. John Brahm.
...No, I didn't fall asleep at the type-
...writer, that's the title, Dolinsky's Star
...Trek may have been stinky, but his
...Outer Limits were okay. This is a lan-
...guid, surreal dreamlike fantasy with
...elements of the absurd, carried off by
...the extraordinary charismatic pres-
...ence of the young Joanna Frank, who
...plays a queen bee turned to human
...form. Apparently (Show and Frenz's
...interviews again), Dolinsky saw the
...story as a fable about matriarchy and

dom neering women, but the happily married Stefano rewrote it as a story of failed seduction and fidelity. Frank's bee-girl Regina wants to create a hybrid race of bee-people... "Human life strives ceaselessly to perfect itself, to gain ascendancy," says the opening narration, "but what of lower forms of life?" What, indeed, Wisely, John Brahm, a *Twilight Zone* and *Thriller* veteran, films the episode almost like a fairy-tale rather than a speculative fiction, which would have rendered it laughable. As it was, the success of the show owed everything to Frank's perfect casting as the bee-girl (most recently she has been seen as Douglas Brackman's snotty wife on *L.A. Law*) and Conrad Hall's brilliant photographic trickery. It was Stefano who named the bee-girl Regina in his rewrite — would you believe Dolinsky named her *Dans*???

Don't Open Until Doomsday

wr. Joseph Stefano, dir. Gerd Oswald
Old stagers John Hoyt (a sci-fi veteran) and Miriam Hopkins have a whale of a time hamming it up through this bizarre Freudian fantasy



about a virginal honeymoon couple in an old house who have a phallic alien hidden amongst their wedding presents. The groom is absorbed into the immortal alien's box, where he survives without aging, a prisoner until his wife, now a crany old lady, lets them both out so that the alien can invade Earth (just how much invading can this little one-eyed slug do?).

Enter a new honeymoon couple who might be tricked into taking the odd couple's place in this timeless hell... It's full to the brim with what comic Ben Elton would call "doobies", and the network censors never spotted any of them! And who is the little person in the monster suit? Midget Frank Delfino, who also served on a couple of second season *Lost In Space*.

The Belleroph Shield

wr. Joseph Stefano, by Arthur Leo Zagat, dir. John Brahm
Another gem; an innocent, friendly alien becomes a pawn in a power game between a scientist and his greedy, grasping wife... who engineers her own descent into hell in a chilling climax. Martin Landau, Sally Kellerman, John Hoyt, and Neil Hamilton are all *Outer Limits* returnees. Stefano's next door neighbour, dancer

Chira Rivera, makes up the cast of this gothic pulp classic.

Children Of Spider County

wr. Anthony Lawrence, dir. Leonard Horn

One of Wah Chang's best alien masks grace the sur-and-rie odd form of Kent Smith (Edgar Scoville in *The Invaders*) as the alien Aabel, who has come to the boonies to retrieve a handful of juvenile delinquents who are in fact his spawn from a previous visit to Earth to impregnate women with male children, a rarity on his home world. Some extraordinary visuals grace an intriguing premise, with the mandible-faced bug-eyed monster stamping through monochrome sunlit forests with dreamlike clarity. Trivia: Lee Kinsolving specialised in playing rebellious teens and also turned up in another J.d. role in *Twilight Zone*'s silly "Black Leather Jackets" that same year.

The Mutant

wr. Allan Balier, David Mintz, Ellis St. Joseph, Joseph Stefano, Jerome Thomas, dir. Alan Crosland Jr.
Warren Oates, who played cowboy

astronaut Jimmy Hapgood in "Welcome Stranger" for *Lost In Space*, had been a regular on Stevens' *Stoney Burke* series, and starred in the first Daystar feature *Private Property*, a role in *The Outer Limits* was perhaps a foregone conclusion. He plays the title role, one of an interplanetary expedition to another world who breaks the rules, takes his protective goggles off and becomes a tortured lunatic who can kill with a touch and read his former colleagues' minds. His greatest affliction though, is his inability to sleep, which perhaps is what drives him crazy and this horror is accentuated by hideous bugged-out eyes that envelop almost the entire top half of his head. Many parallels are drawn between his inability to sleep, and the eternal sleep he is inflicting on his former friends as they succumb to his murderous instincts. The idea came from Ellis St. Joseph, but others worked the script. Stefano reckons it's the worst episode, but it ain't, it's okay. It was filmed in the same desert area as Siegel's *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers* and numerous other sci-fi features. Schow and Frentz point out that the deadly rain that initially transforms Oates is the same effects technique employed for the "beaming up" on *Star Trek*. Watch also for a cheapo cameo reappearance of a Zanti Musfit, playing a bug-eyed mutated ant!

Second Chance

wr. Sonya Roberts, Lou Motheim, dir. Paul Stanley

A silly one. A group of people climb board a fairground spaceship ride but good heavens, it's the real thing, and off they go into space. Roberts allegedly penned it as a parody, and it was a half-witted idea then. Motheim then takes her clichés — look out, it's a meteor shower!! — seriously. Bad luck for Don Gordon, but at least Simon Oakland got to hide behind the monster mask (which you can also see, in slightly altered form, in the *Star Trek* pilot "The Cage") but blink and you miss it — he's in the menagerie!

Fun And Games

wr. Robert Specht, Joseph Stefano, dir. Gerd Oswald

Fredric Brown's short story "Arena" is said to be the inspiration for both this episode and the *Star Trek* "Arena" and the concept of pitting two people against each other for the gratuitous entertainment of a malevolent third party has never really gone away from either science fiction or straight fiction. It showed up again in at least two other *Star Trek* stories: "Dread And Circuses" (which in turn may have inspired Schwarzenegger's *Running Man* and others) and "The Gamesters Of Triskellion", as well as *Lost In Space*'s "Deadly Games Of Gamma Six" and numerous comic-book yarns. Okay though this entry is, a malevolent cackling moustache-twirling alien seems more at home in the likes of *Doctor Who* than a series of this calibre, and there's far too much of him. Personally, I prefer the *Star Trek* episode to this; Nick Adams is good in the lead though.

The Guests

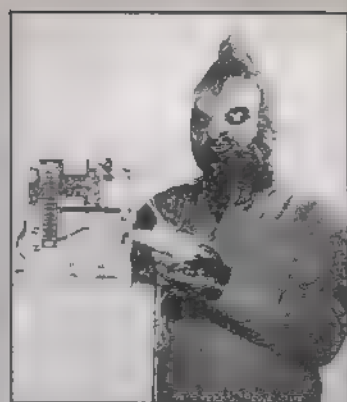
wr. Donald Sanford, by Charles Beaumont, dir. Paul Stanley

Although Sanford was a regular writer on *Boris Karloff's Thriller*, and Charles Beaumont a *Twilight Zone* contributor, this is nevertheless pure Stefano: dark, gothic, bizarre, concerning a house occupied by a variety of broken loonies who are hiding from life. In an old tumbledown mansion that realises their petty dreams for them and which, for no immediately discernible reason, is in reality a giant extra-terrestrial brain. Enjoyably *couré*.

The Production And Decay Of Strange Particles

wr. and dir. Leslie Stevens

Another of Stevens quickie-cheapies to save time and money that had been used on other episodes, this gobbledygook works even less well than "The Borderland", which at least had a premise. It sure looks good, but it doesn't make much sense. George MacReady and Robert Fortier are re-



turnees, MacReady from "The Invisibles", Fortier from another quickie, "Controlled Experiment". Leonard Nimoy makes the first of two bit-part appearances in weak episodes.

The Special One

wr. Oliver Crawford, dir. Gerd Oswald

Oliver Crawford wrote two good *Star Treks*: "Let This Be Your Last Battlefield" and the brilliant "The Galileo Seven" — one of the better *Land Of The Giants*, "The Clones", and "The Last Bomb" for *Voyage*. The premise here, which doesn't quite come off, is that the son of an all-American TV-type family is being haunted by a fascist hostile alien teacher who intends to use intelligent kids as a stepping stone to world conquest. And yep, it's the kid who saves the world, making the episode a sort of wish-fulfillment fantasy for the show's younger audience.

The Chameleon

wr. Robert Towne, dir. Gerd Oswald

An episode more typical of the second season, with Robert Duvall (who also appears in "The Invaders" for *Voyage*, the superlative "Chase Through Time" for *The Time Tunnel*, and another *Outer Limits*, "The Inheritors") as a cold and callous government hit-man (following in the footsteps of the equally tortured loner Don Gordon portrayed in "The Invisibles", sent to do away with two stranded aliens who have wiped out a troop of soldiers in self-defence. In shades of "The Architects Of Fear", Duvall is transformed into "one of them" to perform his mission — by the same actor as the doctor in that earlier episode!

The Form Of Things Unknown

wr. Joseph Stefano, dir. Gerd Oswald

Originally intended by Stefano as a pilot for a non-SF gothic horror series, this bizarre yarn — another old dark house tale starring David McCalm as a man who tinkers with time — had SF elements that were added for *The Outer Limits* and subtracted for the proposed *The Unknown*. Although nothing came of Stefano's pilot, the distinctive "tearing" of the opening credits were used some years later for another ABC SF show, *The Invaders*, which also featured the music of dominic Frontiere, the *Outer Limits* composer. As for the piece itself, it co-stars Vera Miles and Barbara Rush (of *It Came From Outer Space* fame), with Sir Cedric Hardwicke in his final role.

TOWERS OF

They seek him here, they seek him there. We found him! Legendary exploitation movie producer Harry Alan Towers talks exclusively to *The Dark Side* about his long career.

TERROR



The man himself: Harry Alan Towers

Harry Alan Towers is a pretty crafty guy, the sort of fella who can watch Wimbledon without moving his head! The story goes that in the late 60s he was in the middle of shooting a sleazy low-budget epic called *HOUSE OF A THOUSAND DOLLS* on location in Spain. A visitor to the set enquired exactly how a character he had spotted in a stovepipe hat with a beard and a wart on his face fitted into the action. Towers explained that to get permission to film in the country he had been forced to submit a script to the Spanish censors. Realising they would take a dim view of *DOLLS* – a sordid tale of white slavery – he concocted an alternative screenplay entitled *ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS*, which passed their approval. But of course he had to have an Abe Lincoln there just in case the censor called in to check up on him!

There are many other Towers stories that have since entered into legend, most of them not possible to discuss here without chancing a few lawsuits! Suffice it to say that this man has led a rich and colourful life. He was born in London in October,

1920, started out as a child actor, became a prolific radio writer during WW2, and was appointed head of the Overseas Broadcasting Services. After the war he went on to form his 'Towers Of London' organisation, which pioneered the international syndication of transcribed radio programmes. Then with the coming of commercial television, Towers headed the British ATV company and was the Programme Director of the first London Weekend Programme Contractor. He went on to enter the field of independent television production and was responsible for such successful shows as *DIAL 999*, *THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL* and *TALES FROM DICKENS*. Then in 1962 he became a film producer with a minor 'B' feature entitled *INVITATION TO MURDER*. Since then he has produced countless other pictures, often scripting them himself under his regular pseudonym of Peter Welbeck. Towers' extensive credits in the horror/exploitation field include *PSYCHO-CIRCUS* (1965), *THE MILLION EYES OF SU-MURU* (1967), *HOUSE OF 1000 DOLLS* (1967), *VENUS IN FURS* (1970), *COUNT DRACULA* (1970) *THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME* (1970), *FANNY HILL* (1971), *GOR* (1985), *EDGE OF SANITY* (1989) and *HOWLING IV* (1989). He has recently produced some movies based on the works of Edgar Allan Poe: *HOUSE OF USHER*, *MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH*, and *BURIED ALIVE*, as well as the Robert Englund version of Gaston Leroux's *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*.

Towers has rarely been interviewed over the years. He spends most of his time in Canada, when not jetting round the world making movies, but we managed to catch up with him at his London apartment. Located just around the corner from Broadcasting House, the place is a cleaning lady's nightmare, a treasure trove of musty old books and press clippings. A

plaque reveals George Orwell died on the same site – possibly of claustrophobia! It was early in the evening – around 7.30 – but my host met me at the door wearing pyjamas, explaining, 'I find it helps me to relax during interviews.' I suppose with his background he has earned the right to be just a little bit eccentric...

Masque of the Red Death





DARK SIDE: You seem to have a particular fondness for producing horror movies. Why is that?

TOWERS: The good thing about a horror film is that if you do it well then nobody bothers about how much it costs. Most of the horror films I have been associated with have made quite a lot of money. Erotic movies are the same, though you can get into censorship troubles there.

DARK SIDE: I believe you often get round this by shooting stronger 'continental' versions of your films for the foreign market.

TOWERS: That's unnecessary today. It's not worth the trouble. Back in the 60s I did that with films like *THE BRIDES OF FU-MANCHU*. The girls took their tops off in the version that played on the continent. The Fu-Manchu films were always very popular. The rights are back with us now, so maybe we will bring Fu-Manchu back for television. The real problem about Fu-Manchu first of all is that he is a villain, an archetype villain, and it's very difficult to do a television series with a villain as a leading man. Secondly, I personally

believe that you have to do Fu-Manchu in period. You can't have a Chinaman like him with those long nails flapping around in the contemporary world.

DARK SIDE: Did you make a lot of money from the FU-MANCHU movies?

TOWERS: I did quite well. The first three in the series were very successful, but the fourth and the fifth were not. That was because one was directed by a little Spaniard called Jess Franco. When I looked at that, I said, 'Jess, you've done something there that nobody else has achieved.' 'What's that?' he asked. 'Killing Fu-Manchu,' I said. Franco is of course still directing movies. Gerald Kirkoine, who made *EDGE OF SANITY* for me, started as an editor for Jess Franco. I tend to pick up these rather weird characters and exaggerate the depths of their talent. Somebody once said of Jess Franco, he was a jazz musician who played the trombone until he discovered the zoom lens.

DARK SIDE: Franco has actually become something of a cult figure nowadays.

TOWERS: Goodness knows why! I saw one of his movies recently and he's still got that habit of zooming in and out with

the camera for no discernible reason. Franco has many different names, but he always delivers the same film. He made one big hit movie for me, called *99 WOMEN*. I must tell you how that came about. I had done a picture called *THE MILLION EYES OF SU-MURU*, which was about a female Fu-Manchu character played by Shirley Eaton. This was reasonably successful, so I did a deal to do a sequel to that. I had Franco in Brazil at that time, so we set the sequel there and planned to finish up with footage from the carnival in Rio. Now, Jess, with all his zooming about, always finished very quickly - usually in time to have lunch. Anyway, on this occasion he actually finished filming a whole week before the carnival, so all the cast and crew were just sitting around. I couldn't stand to see this, so, literally over the weekend, I wrote a script called *99 WOMEN*, a sexy women's prison picture. There were actually only 3 women in it, but we hoped that people wouldn't notice!



The story was that these 3 girls were escaping through the jungle. We cast my wife (actress Maria Rohm) and two other actresses and we went to a botanical park about thirty minutes from Copacabana beach and shot for six days. We came home with one third of a movie, which I showed to some producer friends of mine who agreed to put up the money to finish the film off in Alicante with my old friends Herbert Lom, Maria Schell and Mercedes McCambridge - who played the sadistic woman governess. We shot for three weeks in Alicante and had a movie. I remember coming out of a projection theatre on the Champs Elysee with a distributor friend, and he said 'I smell money.' He was right. That picture - which cost less than a quarter of a million dollars - went into distribution in the United States - and it was the biggest grossing picture in America for three

An atmospheric shot from Phantom Of The Opera





Jess Franco's pendulum swings...

weeks. Unfortunately the company for which I made it, Commonwealth United, got into all sorts of stupid adventures and went bankrupt. But that was Jess Franco at his best, his moment of greatness. I still like him a lot as a person. He's a nice little man.

While we're on the subject of Franco, he made quite a good erotic picture for me based on the Marquis De Sade's *JUSTINE*, with Maria Power, who was the daughter of Tyrone Power, and a very good cast – Jack Palance, Mercedes McCambridge again, Akim Tamiroff, Sylvia Koscina and Klaus Kinski. Kinski never forgave me for that picture. He's made many films for me since of course. I mean, he was rather hot when I was in Italy at the time. I only needed him for one day's shooting, but he haggled with me through his agent. I finally agreed to pay him his asking price, but for only half a day. In the morning we picked him up in Barcelona and drove him to this castle where we had constructed a set with naked girls hanging from chains. All Kinski had to do was sit in the middle of the set, writing away with a quill pen – never saying a word! We shot a great deal of footage of this, with Franco zooming in and out, and used this not only at the beginning and the end of the picture, but all through the picture as well, where we were cutting back to Kinski, putting the Marquis De Sade's words over the top, stabbed by an actor who sounded like Kinski. The picture opened all over Germany billed as: 'Starring Klaus Kinski' – and he was furious because he had only been paid for half a day!

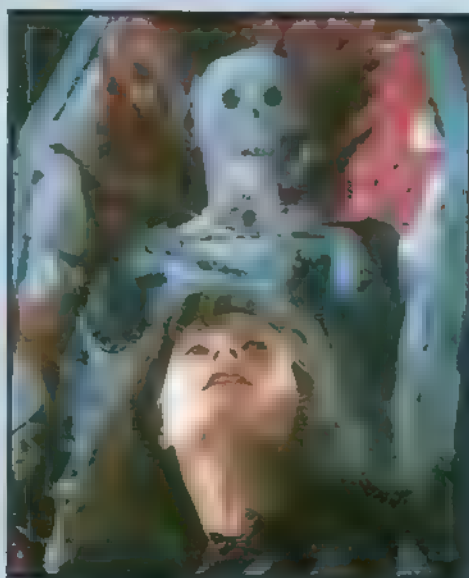


Robert Englund's Phantom

DARK SIDE: Is Kinski as temperamental as everyone says?

TOWERS: Klaus at the moment is unemployable, not because I wouldn't employ him, but because he wants to direct, and that is something that even in my madness I wouldn't agree to. He got into a deal with some Italians in which he agreed to do a picture in Africa playing Paganini, but as far as I know that turned out to be an utter disaster. I did a version of *COUNT DRACULA* in 1970 which was directed by Jess Franco and starred Christopher Lee. I wanted Kinski to play Renfield in this, the guy who eats the flies. He wouldn't do it, so I did the deal with his agents and persuaded them not to tell him the name of the picture he would be working on. He turned up for the first day's shooting and went straight into a scene where he had to strangle a girl, who was played by my wife. After the cameras stopped turning, he looked at me and said 'Why do I feel I am in a *DRACULA* picture?'

I remember another time when he came over here to do a film for me in the 60s (*PSYCHO-CIRCUS*), and he had a scene where he got shot, fell to the floor and died. When the time came to film this, Kinski pirouetted, fell down, coughed blood, got up, pirouetted again, died a third time, got up and pirouetted again before



House of Usher

finally collapsing. And the English director – a fellow named John Moxey – said, 'Thank you very much, Mr Kinski. Would you mind doing a second take, perhaps a little shorter?' And Kinski pulled himself up to all his five-foot nothing and said, 'Yes I would. I've died in more f***ing movies than you've directed!' He was right of course.

DARK SIDE: Do you have any favourites among your own movies?

TOWERS: The ones I made most money on! The early *Fu-Manchu* films, particularly the very first one, *FACE OF FU-MANCHU*. In more recent times I was very pleased with *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*. Dwight Little did a good job of directing that one. I also have a particular

fondness for *TEN LITTLE INDIANS*. I've done *TEN LITTLE INDIANS* three times now. I've just done it again in Africa with Donald Pleasence, Herbert Lom – the whole repertory company. Same script – different locations. You always kill off the most expensive stars first!

DARK SIDE: How did you come to adopt the nom-de-plume of Peter Welbeck?



Oliver Reed and Donald Pleasance in House of Usher.

TOWERS: I was a prolific radio writer when I was young and used to write two or three shows a week for the BBC. Some of the higher-ups said, 'Stop this young man writing everything.' I've always lived in this area near Broadcasting House, and before they had numbers the telephone exchange code was Welbeck, so I adopted Welbeck as my pseudonym. Peter Welbeck has now more or less retired. He writes the treatments rather than the scripts. He likes the good life too much.

DARK SIDE: How many films do you think you have been involved in over the years?

TOWERS: I couldn't even hazard a guess. I don't have a complete list of my films any more. I used to, but it got thrown out. I don't expect there would be as many films on it as there would be on Jess Franco's list! Actually I've just thought of another funny Franco story. He has a cousin or a nephew who is now quite a successful member of the French avant-garde movement – Ricardo Franco. I remember that Jess was once making a picture for me on which Ricardo was his assistant. I heard Ricardo talking one day, saying that he had just made his first feature movie, and when I congratulated him and asked who had provided the finance, he said: 'It was very difficult – Jess could only give me the camera and the crew for two hours a day.' It turned out he had made his picture on my time and my negative!

DARK SIDE: Tell us about some of your recent projects. Let's start with *EDGE OF SANITY*, the *Jekyll and Hyde* picture you did with Anthony Perkins.

TOWERS: We shot a weekend in Clapham, and the rest in Budapest, with a French director. I had high hopes for that picture, but it didn't work out quite as well as I thought it would. I personally would have preferred to have made the whole movie in



Anthony Perkins on *The Edge of Sanity*

England, but of course it's another million dollars on the budget to make a picture in England nowadays. So we chose the compromise. We had a very imaginative French art director – I don't think he had a very good sense of period (chuckles). Many people have brought up the fact that the film is supposed to be set in Victorian times and yet some of the characters are dressed in a contemporary fashion and use new pound coins! But ninety percent of video sales are in places where it wouldn't matter at all if they had five pound notes made of toilet paper.'

DARK SIDE: Did you enjoy working with Anthony Perkins?

TOWERS: Perkins is great fun. I'm hoping to do another picture with him. What am I saying? I AM doing another picture with him! We're doing a picture together in Israel, which Ken Russell is directing. Ken and I have had various schemes through the years, but none of them has ever got made. This one will get made because it's a 'Mummy' picture and Perkins has always wanted to do a 'Mummy' picture (doesn't PSYCHO

count?) It has rather a good script written by Nelson Giddings, who wrote *THE HAUNTING*, and I've done a deal with Cannon or Pathe or whatever they call themselves to shoot it in Israel, which is rather good because there are a lot of Egyptians over there! Giddings has taken the Tutankhamen situation, with Carter and everybody else getting their comeuppance for digging up the tomb. It has a certain amount of sex in it. Well, it would have to have with Russell and Perkins both involved! Did you know that Russell gave an interview after he made *CRIMES OF PASSION*, in which he said that all the basic ideas he had in *CRIMES OF PASSION* had come from a long reconnaissance of the fleshpots of Europe he had done with me for another film?

DARK SIDE: You have recently been involved in a series of Edgar Allan Poe movies. Tell us more about those.

TOWERS: I didn't want to compete with the Corman Poe films of the 60s. My idea was to make them gothic in their look, but contemporary as well. The first film we made was a thing called *BURIED ALIVE*, which was really a concoction of various bits of Poe, which went quite well. Then we made *HOUSE OF USHER*, *MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH*, and we're finishing up with *THE RAVEN*, with Donald Pleasence again. The thing about Poe is that most of the stories are really only short anecdotes, and just provide the starting points for movies. He wrote very few pieces – with the possible exception of *MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE* – that contain a full plot.

I must say that I think I've done my Poe bit, I'm not a particular fan so I'm not going to do any more. I have done a number of other horror things lately as well. I made *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* of course, which was quite a big production with Robert Englund. We made that last year, partly in Budapest, but also with some shooting in the USA as well. We got good reviews in America but it didn't do as well as we all hoped. I realise now that though the Andrew Lloyd Webber *PHANTOM* has brought the story a lot of popularity, most people still tend to be discouraged by the word 'Opera' in the title. We were going to make a sequel to *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* called *PHANTOM OF MANHATTAN*, and may now do it as *TERROR IN MANHATTAN*, once more with Robert Englund.

DARK SIDE: You once apparently boasted that you could get off a plane in any country in the world and have a film underway within 24 hours...

TOWERS: There was a period in my life when I relished that challenge. My dear wife says I'm only really happy when I'm attempting the impossible. Yes, I think I probably did say that, and I would stand by it still.

DARK SIDE: What are your future plans?

TOWERS: I'm just about to start work on a major television project, a mini-series called *THE GOLDEN YEARS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*. It's going to be eight, one-hour adventures set in the days when Holmes is a worldwide celebrity and can't go anywhere without meeting equally famous people who welcome him as a friend. Against wondrously exotic backgrounds he does the good old Sherlock Holmes stuff and solves mysteries. The first one is where King Edward VII invites Sherlock Holmes to Windsor and tells him that the Star of Africa is about to come to England to form part of the crown jewels – this is all historically true – and Holmes is the only man who can protect its delivery to England. So Holmes and Watson go to Capetown in 1910 and become involved in a mystery which ultimately puts them on a period train – shades of *The Orient Express* – enroute to Victoria Falls. Peppered in amongst the various suspects are real people, including Lord Roberts, who Johnny Mills has agreed to play.

Incidentally, Holmes will be Christopher Lee and Watson is Patrick Macnee, both slightly in their dotage I guess. Also on the trip is Theodore Roosevelt, who really did go to Africa in the early part of this century, Lillie Langtree, and Marconi.

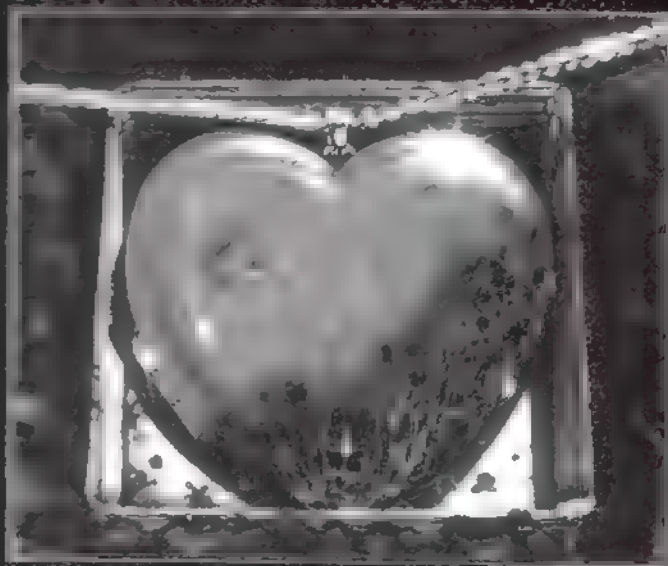
DARK SIDE: What, no Donald Pleasence?

TOWERS: (Laughs) I dare say we'll fit him in somewhere. Menahem Golan says, 'You should be married to Donald Pleasence!' I do believe in having the protein character actors in my movies, and Donald is one of the best. There aren't so many around unfortunately. There are no new Christopher Lees or Peter Cushing's. Their number is dwindling every day. It's very sad, but time marches on.



Christopher Lee as Fu Manchu

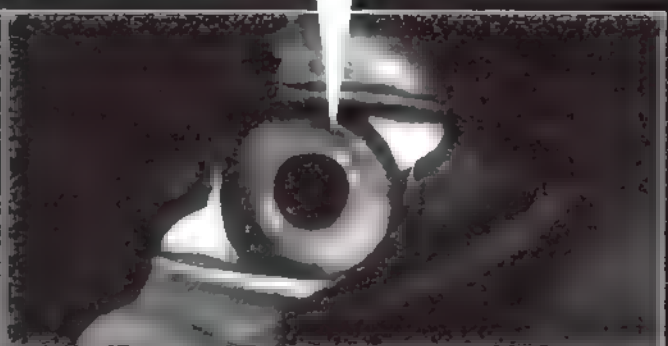
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What are those sulphurous fumes coming from Hadria Hemlock's cauldron? Either she's washing her socks again, or it's time to find out what November holds for all you guys and ghouls...



HorrorScope



CAPRICORN
22nd Dec - 20th Jan

Friends will be everywhere, making this a good month in which to hold a monster party. Friends tell you you are good looking, lively, witty and unforgettable this month. Make the most of it, Dorian - someone could find that painting any day.



AQUARIUS
21st Jan - 18th Feb

Career and status are very much on your mind this month. There could be problems at home on the 2nd, but you will talk your way out of them. By mid-month you will be full of charm and vitality. But be like The Phantom and keep some of it hidden behind your mask, or you risk jealousy from your neighbours.



PISCES
19th Feb - 20th Mar

Travel is your thing in November. You fishy fiends love vamping it up after foreign blood (which is highly spiced, so be careful of holiday tummy). Those who stay behind will be well advised to remember the lessons of the past - don't buy Drac another shaving mirror for Christmas!



ARIES
21st Mar - 20th April

You have lots of energy, but beware of getting things done too quickly. An inheritance is on the cards this month, but be careful not to get caught when loosening those brakes. Financial matters need attention on the 2nd. Steer clear of brothers (Grimm?).



TAURUS
21st April - 21st May

Don't overreach yourself on the night of the full moon on the 2nd - greedy werewolves often bite off more than they can chew. From the 18th you will find you are attracted to a dark stranger. Try to resist, it could cost you your soul, that's if it hasn't already gone at a knock-down price.



GEMINI
22nd May - 21st June

Joint ventures are very much on your mind after the 11th. Until then you will be preoccupied with health worries - in spite of being in robust health. Around the 19th you will become talkative and nervous, worrying about skeletons in the closet. So make sure the bodies are well buried.



CANCER
22nd June - 22nd July

You may feel like gambling this month, which is unlike you. Go ahead and follow your instincts, you will find it very profitable. Creating something new is important, particularly if your name is Frankenstein. Friends, projects and social life are important. Good days for body-snatching: 7th and 27th.



LEO
23rd July - 23rd Aug

Looking for attention? The full moon on the 2nd will bring you all you can handle, though that may include the odd silver bullet or two. Otherwise, home life is the thing for you this month. Get the den in order for luxury Winter evenings ahead. Mulled blood cocktails by the fire - lovely!



VIRGO
24th Aug - 23rd Sept

You talk yourself into problems in the first part of this month and out of them again after the 19th. Try to think before you speak and then you won't have to do so much apologising. Be careful of people from foreign parts - or creatures with foreign parts for that matter!



LIBRA
24th Sept - 23rd Oct

Money and possessions are chaining you down this month which makes it very hard to get out of the coffin. You hate ties but you are very tempted to take out a loan. Resist that temptation until after the 29th, and you will have a partner to help you out. As Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde will tell you: two heads are better than one.



SCORPIO
24th Oct - 22nd Nov

You have a real sting in your tail this month. You never have been one to suffer fools idly, and when you know you are right you will stick to your guns. Beware of strangers bringing messages around the 23rd - particularly if one of them is nine foot tall and has a bolt through his neck.



SAGITTARIUS
23rd Nov - 21st Dec

This is an uneasy month. Too much stake with garlic sauce around! On the 2nd the full moon will cause you to become worried for your safety, but all will end well. Money and health worries continue, but get more under control, as the month draws to a close.



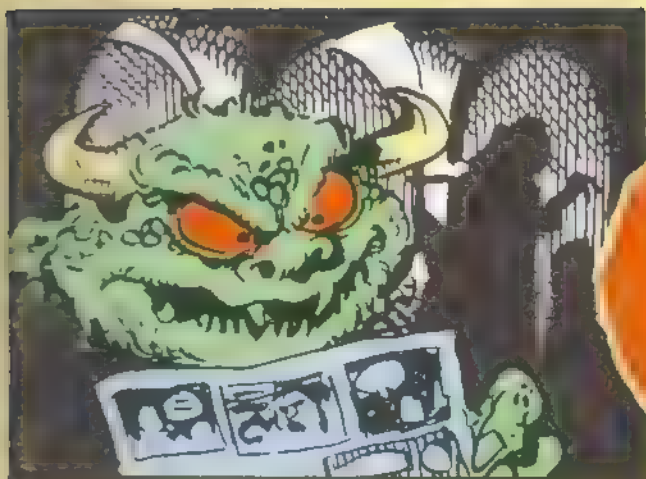
COMING NEXT MONTH!



Cowabunga! Are those **TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES** as green as all the cabbage they've earned? Alan Frank reviews the magahit movie, while Alan McKenzie charts the Turtles' spectacular transition

from the comics page to the big screen. In case you haven't noticed, Christmas is coming, and to get in the fearsome festive spirit we'll be looking at the screen's most sinister Santas - from **CHRISTMAS EVIL** to **SILENT NIGHT, DEADLY NIGHT**. You will also find exclusive interviews with Italian horror maestros Dario (**SUSPIRIA**) Argento, and Luigi (**CONTAMINATION**) Cozzi - the latter explaining how his new version of **THE BLACK CAT** is actually the third part of Argento's 'Three Mothers' trilogy. Confused? You will be when you see the movie... On the television front we'll be bringing you a complete episode guide to the cult series **LAND OF THE GIANTS**, and giving you a sneak preview of shocks on the box over the Xmas holidays. All this, plus comprehensive news, views and reviews from the wonderfully weird world of movies, books, video, comics and computer games, makes **THE DARK SIDE** the most fun you can have without getting a stake through your heart! If you haven't been sensible enough to subscribe yet, you will find issue 3 lurking on sale at your local newsagent from November 22. Go on - have a ghoulish yule with Britain's biggest value horror mag!





COMIC Crypt

After ALIENS - THE MOVIE comes ALIENS - THE COMIC BOOK. Alan McKenzie bets on a Dark Horse.....

Darkside magazine first contacted me about writing this monthly column, it seemed like an easy fee. I work in the

comics business, and because of my privileged position I get a free supply of all the comics published by the big American companies. And because I spend all my time

on the phone talking to Britain's comics writers and artists I get to hear about deals as they are struck and I'm privy to all the latest tittle-tattle, all the Chinese Whispers that go around the comics network.

As I write this month's column, it's a week before the United Kingdom Comic Art Convention (or 'You Kack' as it's affectionately known). Just about every writer and artist and letterer and editor working in the wacky world of comics will be there. A herd of American comics folk will be jetting over to take part. So I'm looking forward to being a fly on the wall. Or more appropriately, at the bar. Because that's where all the talk of 1992's comics projects involving British creators will take place.

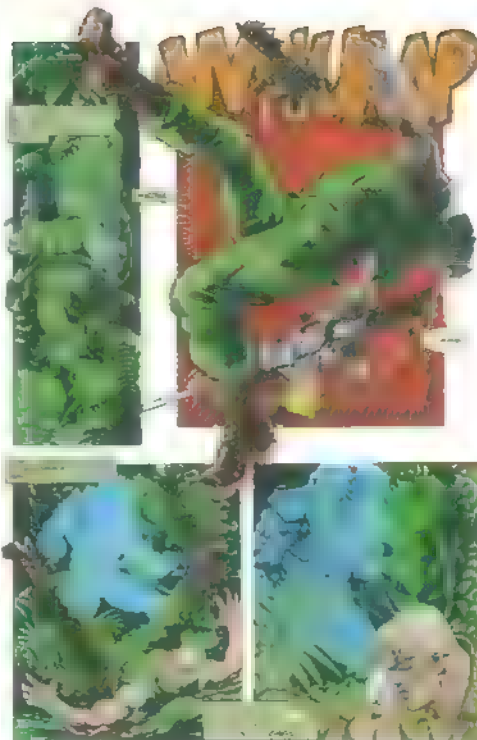
I'm hoping to run into Dark Horse Comics publisher Mike Richardson so I can tell him how much I've been enjoying his Aliens line of comics. Based on the two Twentieth Century Fox movies, the series



began with Aliens: Book 1, which took up the story of Newt as a grown woman as she accompanied Hicks back to Homeworld. The tone of the original films is faithfully maintained and the background information on both the Aliens and the strange, elephant-like race glimpsed in the first movie is enhanced. The script, by Mark Verheiden crackles along at breakneck pace and the moody black-and-white artwork by Mark Nerlson doesn't hold it back one bit.

Aliens: Book 2 begins with the ghastly revelation that the Aliens weren't wiped out at the end of Book 1, which is just as well for Dark Horse. A mad military type, General Spears, is ferrying a cargo of Aliens across space for some evil purpose. Newt and new companion Butler the android are brought aboard Spears' ship and do their level best to see the cargo doesn't arrive at its destination intact. Verheiden's script is even more tense and nerve-wracking than the first Aliens story and there is gorgeous airbrushed artwork by Denis Beauvais to admire.

Both the Aliens mini-series were fabulously successful, selling in the region of 350,000 copies each, necessitating a reprint by Dark Horse to fill the outstanding or-



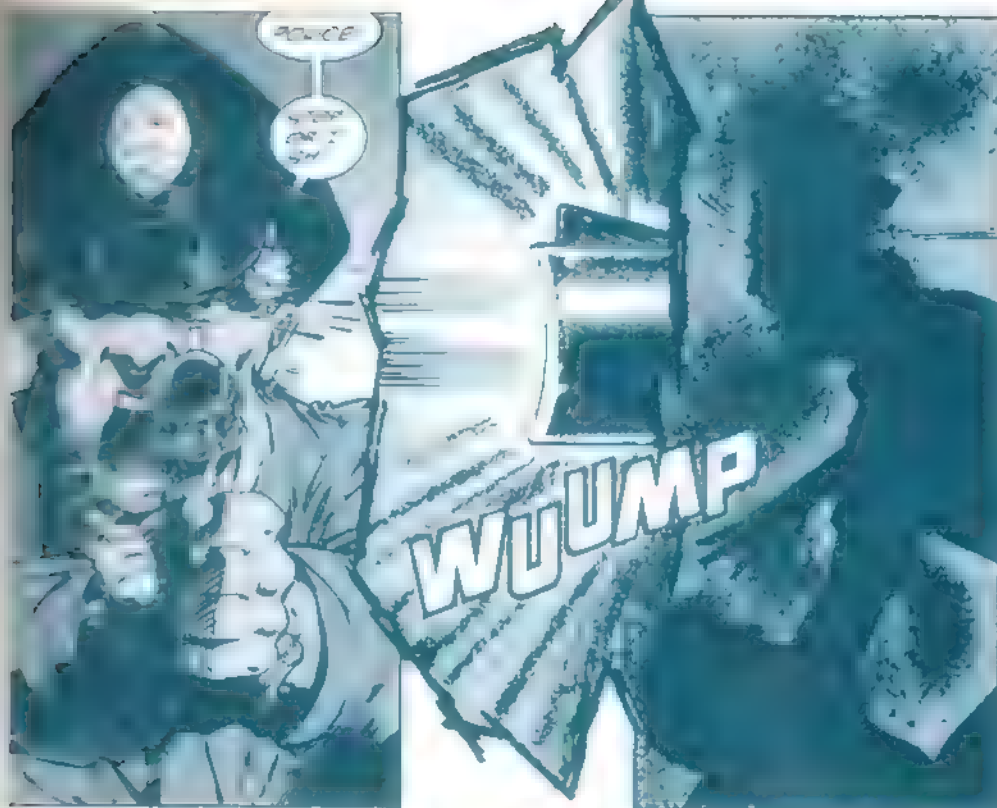
ders. It seemed only natural that they would team the Alien beasties up with the other Twentieth Century Fox monster, Predator. The four issues of the Aliens vs Predator se-

ries were scripted by Dark Horse's executive editor Rick Stradley are not such a harrowing read as Verheiden's work over on Mother Book, but the central idea is so strong that the formula is fool-proof. The artwork, by Phil Norwood and Karl Story, carries the tale along with a deceptively light touch. A good read.

Even more welcome was the return of Verheiden to the main Aliens series with another four-issue run, Aliens: Earth War. Drawn this time by Mark Kieth, the Aliens turn up, surprise, on Earth. Ripley, the character played by Sigourney Weaver in the movies, enters the storyline as a group of marines go back to LV-426, the planet called Acheron by its terraforming colonists. The idea is to find the original derelict ship and gather information about its elephant-like pilot. Needless to say, the wreck is crawling with Aliens, though this is only a prelude to the main thrust of the plot. Ripley conceives a desperate plan to rid Earth of the Aliens. To say more would spoil my fun as well as yours. So buy it yourself.

High on the wave of licensed properties, Dark Horse have added the Terminator to their publishing schedule. And they've brought everything they've learned from their Aliens series with them. The scripts are by John Arcudi and the art is by Chris Warner, artist on the first Predator series. I've only seen the first issue so far but it looks every bit as enjoyable as either Predator or Aliens vs Predator.





CHANGE OF PACE

Another series I want to cover this month is *The Changing Man* by Pete Milligan, with Bachalo/Pennington on art, and published by DC Comics in the States.

Pete Milligan began in the comics business by writing about a trillion Future Shocks for Britain's 2000 AD Weekly. From there he moved up to writing series like *Company*, *The Dead*, and more recently, *Bix Barton*, *Master of the Rum* and *McMann*, all for 2000. He's long been associated with characters like *Brendon McCarthy*, *Brett Ewins* and *Jim McCarthy*, whom he's worked on many 2000 AD projects as well as *Paradox* and *Johnny Semo* for American publishers. After a good run in story on DC's *Batman* title and filling Grant Morrison's not inconsiderable shoes in *Animal Man*, Milligan has thrown himself headlong into a macabre revival of the

old Steve Ditko character, *Shade*.

The must-have, double-bag collector's first issue begins as a kind of re-run of the old *Spencer Tracy/Katherine Hepburn*



movie, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*. The plot takes a sharp left turn and introduces *Shade* as an alien from another dimension who can inhabit and control the bodies of others. And the first body he inhabits is that of a condemned murderer as he takes the Long Walk.

Issues 2 and 3 rake over the old coals of the Kennedy Assassination, a surprising choice of subject matter considering how sensitive many Americans can still be on that subject. That Milligan carries it off with elan and polish speaks volumes for his talents as a writer. You won't find out who really did shoot JFK but you will get a glimpse of a comics creator working at the peak of his powers. *Shade The Changing Man* could be another *Swamp Thing* so buy up those investment copies now.



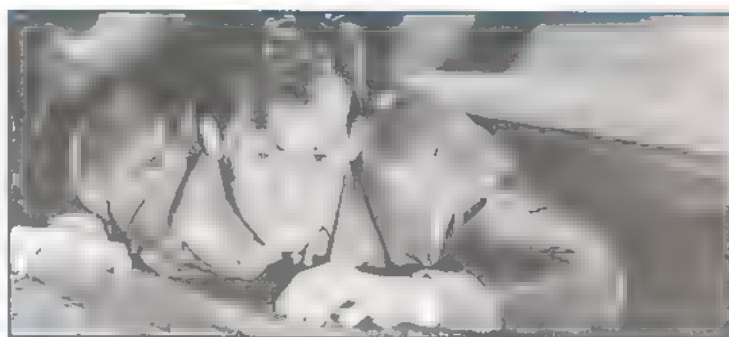
Dark Visions

"We have seen the future of horror, and it's name is..." Richard Marshall - with more murmurings of things to come!

CLIVE WANTS HIS MUMMY

Clive Barker's NIGHTBREED may have been a disappointment to many, but you can't keep a good man down and Britain's bestselling horror author is bouncing back with a two-picture directing deal at Universal. After completing his novel,

IMAJICA, Clive will join Mick (CRITTERS) Garris in scripting a new version of THE MUMMY (always one of the author's favourite horror concepts), which he plans to take before the cameras sometime early next year. This will be followed by an as-yet-untitled science fiction project.



NUCLEAR NIGHT-MARE

One of the biggest hits of the recent SHOCK AROUND THE CLOCK festival was MIRACLE MILE, an impressive second feature from Steve DeJarnatt, whose debut film, CHERRY 2000, proved to be something of a critical and commercial disaster. MIRACLE MILE is a taut, gripping, and totally uncompromising apocalyptic thriller, somewhat reminiscent in tone to the films AIP targeted at the teen crowd in the late 50s and early 60s (remember PANIC IN THE YEAR ZERO starring Ray Milland?) It stars Anthony (TOP GUN) Edwards as a shy young jazz musician who, through a bizarre set of circumstances, learns that a nuclear holocaust is imminent. He decides to use his last 70 minutes of life searching for a girl (Mare Winningham) he met that day and fell in love with. Films about this subject are usually depressing; but this one's not, thanks to De Jarnatt's excellent

handling and his own inspired script. The film cleverly alternates comedy and romance with action, thrills and horror, keeping the viewer breathless and off-balance throughout. Structured appropriately enough like a chain reaction, the film introduces seemingly harmless actions that initiate a series of devastating events. It's full of disturbing little touches that linger in the mind, like when Edwards accidentally hits a palm tree while parking his car and causes several rats to fall on his bonnet - an omen of things to come. You will be hearing a great deal more about this one. Don't miss it when it opens in cinemas in January



SCANNERS II - EXPLODING HEADS AND TERRIFYING TALES

Canadian genre expert David Cronenberg wasn't at all interested in making a sequel to his 1981 tale of telepathic terror, SCANNERS. But that didn't stop the original film's producer, Pierre David, from going ahead with one anyway. Written by B.J. Nelson (who scripted the Chuck Norris hit, LONE WOLF MCQUADE) and directed by former cinematographer Christian Duguay, SCANNERS II - THE NEW ORDER, stars David Hewlett as

the son of the original scanners, Cameron Vale and Kim Obrist. Our hero doesn't realise that he possesses incredible telepathic powers until he travels to the city and comes up against a force of corrupt Scanner cops who use their deadly gift for evil purposes. The special effects for this \$5 million movie are being handled by the newly formed Shadowworks, and include a unique variation of the first film's famed 'exploding head' sequence. This time out one character's head IMPLODES under the force of a multiple scanner onslaught. Wow! That's original... This one is going straight to video via MGM/UA

DARK CARNIVAL

Just 28 years after it was first made, an eerie little low-budget chiller called **CARNIVAL OF SOULS** has been officially declared a cult movie. Shot in Lawrenceville, Kansas, for less than \$20,000 by independent filmmaker Herk Harvey (it remains his only feature), this has now earned a couple of million dollars at the box office. It's very creepy stuff indeed, telling the story of a young girl (Candace Hilligoss) who 'survives' a car accident and thereafter wanders around in a strange world between reality and fantasy. She finds herself drawn towards an abandoned park pavilion, and it is there that she learns of her ultimate, terrifying fate. Featuring an army of George Romero type zombies, and some extremely atmospheric camerawork, this minor masterpiece of the macabre is now being issued in an uncut 85 minute version by Palace Pictures. If you don't live in the London area then you'll have to wait for its video release, which should be coming very soon. *

MORE CHILD'S PLAY

Though he was decapitated and burned to a frazzle at the climax of 1988's **CHILD'S PLAY**, Chucky the killer doll returns to create more murderous mayhem in the forthcoming **CHILD'S PLAY 2**. The special effects are once more provided by Kevin Yagher, and actor Brad Douriff is back as the voice of Chucky. Young Alex Vincent is also back as Andy Barclay, the little lad who got given the killer doll by his mum in the first movie. This time out though, Andy's mum Catherine Hicks is not around to look after him. The sequel finds Andy going into a foster home to be looked after by Jenny Agutter and Gerrit Graham. His problems begin when the toy company that manufactured 'Chucky' get hold of the demon doll's burned remains and use them as the basis for a new, more indestructible creation... **CHILD'S PLAY 2** is directed by John Laffia, co-writer of the first film, and apparently features a great deal of spectacular action. The film looks much bigger in terms of the design, the atmosphere, the lighting,' says Laffia. 'It will be visually far more fluid, with sequences 12 or 13 minutes long without any dialogue.'

THE SCENT OF EVIL

Just to prove she IS a gal to be sniffed at, horror queen Elvira (alias former Las Vegas showgirl Cassandra Petersen) has introduced her very own fragrance. It's called 'Evil by Elvira', and if you splash it on too liberally then you probably won't show up in the mirror afterwards!



THE FAMILY THAT SLAYS TOGETHER

Those sinister 60s television favourites **THE ADDAMS FAMILY** Are coming to the big screen in a movie of the same name directed by Barry Sonnenfeld, the cinematographer who gave such a boost to Danny De Vito's **THROW MOMMA FROM THE TRAIN**. So far no casting has



been arranged, but one actor who will probably be back is series regular John Astin. Astin can also be seen in **KILLER TOMATOES STRIKE BACK**, playing an evil scientist called Dr Gengrene - inventor of the 'bacon, lettuce and human sandwich.' Expect tomato mania to grip the country when this one's released by New World Video!



CELLULOID SHIPPEYS

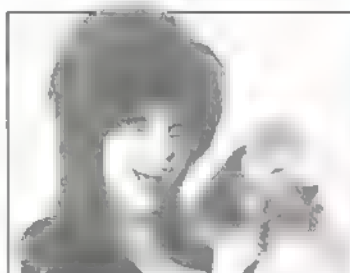
Rocker Billy Idol has joined the cast of the \$60 million **TERMINATOR 2** - hope he remembers to wear his crash helmet! It seems that music video veteran David Fincher is now set to direct **ALIEN III**, but this may yet change... John Carpenter is back in harness again with **MEMOIRS OF AN INVISIBLE MAN**. Let's hope he makes a better job of this film adaption of Harry Saint's comic novel than he did of **PRINCE OF**

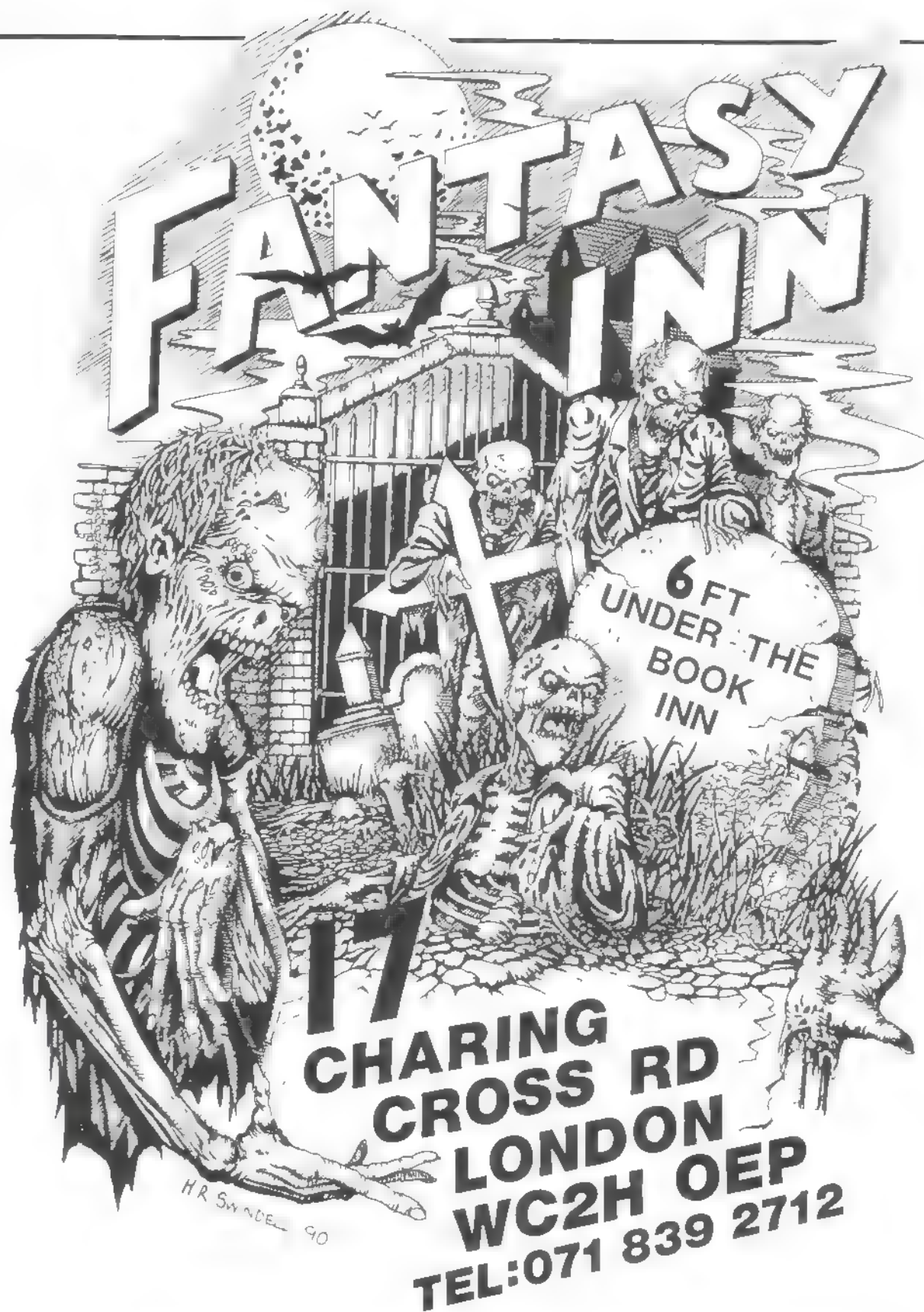
DARKNESS and **IT'S ALIVE!** Sylvester Stallone goes into the horror/science fiction market with the mega budget **DEAD RECKONING**, directed by MOON 44's Roland Emmerich. Paul (TOTAL RECALL) Verhoven is working on a supernatural adventure called **WARRIOR**. Henry Thomas (of E.T. fame) will play the young Norman Bates in **PSYCHO IV**. Still on the sequels front, would you believe somebody's making **CHILDREN OF THE CORN II**? Why are

LONG LIVE THE KING - STEPHEN, THAT IS!

Though a great many of Stephen King's stories have been filmed, very few have made the transition to the big screen with any distinction, nor indeed made much money. But because **PET SEMATARY** took almost \$60 million last year it looks like we are off on another round of King adaptations. The most eagerly awaited of these is **MISERY**, scripted by William Goldman and directed by Rob Reiner - more on that one next issue. **GRAVEYARD SHIFT** also sounds promising. Based on King's third published short story (which originally appeared in **ESQUIRE** 20 years ago), it tells of the horrors that lurk in store for the night workers at a rodent-infested mill. The film will star Brad Douriff (so memorable in **CHILD'S PLAY**) as an eccentric exterminator called in to deal with the problem. It is to be directed by Ralph S. Singleton, who cut his teeth doing production work on **HARLEM NIGHTS** and **ANOTHER 48 HRS**. And yes, King WILL be doing one of his customary cameos - this time as a disgruntled millworker who finds rat hair in his food!

they bothering - the original was a real loser! We might also be seeing a **SHOCKER II**, although some reports suggest that Wes Craven will do the next **ELM STREET** movie instead. And finally, John (AMERICAN WEREWOLF) Landis is preparing **THE RETURN OF WILLARD**, with Bruce Davidson reprising his star role as the man who gets on better with rats than he does with people - sounds like the story of my life!





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THE DARK SIDE COMPETITION CRYPT

We have plenty of ghoulish goodies to give away this month to the more knowledgable of you fright fiends out there. To save you having to queue up at the ghost office we have arranged with British Terrorcom to set up a hellish hot-line for you to phone your answers across. All you have to do is stick your bony claw into the telephone and dial...



*First in a terrific trio of prize offerings is the spectacular underwater chiller, **LEVIATHAN**. Directed by George Pan Cosmatos – the same fella who brought you **RAMBO 2** and the great killer rat flick, **OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN** – it's **ALIENS** at the bottom of the Ocean, and features **ROBOCOP**'S Peter Weller slugging it out with a yukky Stan Winston monster. **CBS FOX VIDEO** have kindly donated ten copies.*

*Secondly comes a truly **MARVEL**-lous prize. **LEISUREVIEW VIDEO** are about to release three new titles featuring the animated adventures of popular Marvel Comics characters **THE FANTASTIC FOUR**, **X-MEN** and **ROBOCOP**. We have five sets of all three titles to give away, plus five exclusive **X-MEN** tee-shirts.*



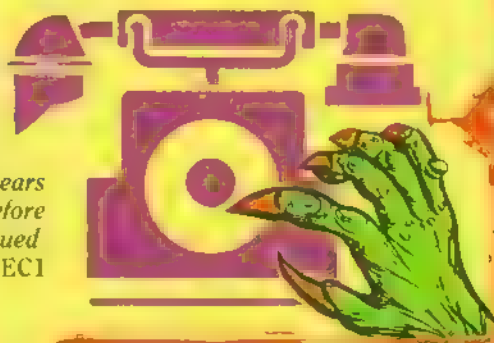
*Finally, **MEDUSA HOME VIDEO** have given us ten copies of their action-packed new science-fiction thriller, **PEACEMAKER**, which we predict will become one of the surprise video hits of the year. If you liked **THE TERMINATOR** and **THE HIDDEN**, then you mustn't miss this one.*



*If you want to win one of these great prizes, all you have to do is lift up the phone and dial 0898-345997. You will be asked a series of questions concerning recent horror releases, and if you answer correctly your name will go forward for inclusion in the prize draw collection. Be warned that the questions aren't easy. But you can enter as many times as you like, for all three competitions. **DON'T DELAY – IT'S EASIER THAN WRITING OUT A GHOSTCARD!***

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*33p per minute cheap rate/44p per minute at all other times winners under 18 years old must produce parental consent before prizes are issued
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THE DARKMAN COMES

Maitland McDonagh
Interviews Sam Raimi

Meet Sam Raimi, child prodigy: his **EVIL DEAD** was one of the most promising genre debuts of the last 20 years, and if his next two pictures – **CRIMEWAVE** and **EVIL DEAD 2: DEAD BY DAWN** – didn't quite measure up, they still maintained a surprisingly assured and audacious tone. Produced by Renaissance Pictures, a production company formed by Raimi and friends Robert Tapert and Bruce Campbell (who also starred in all three films, as well as William Lustig's **MANIAC COP** and others), Raimi's films are roller-coaster rides through candy-coloured hells where sardonic demons gibber and shriek and the exterminators who claim "We kill all sizes" really mean it. All three were completed before he turned 30.

Raimi's newest film, **DARKMAN**, is something rather – if not completely – different. Starring noted Irish actor Liam (THE GOOD MOTHER) Neeson and Frances (BLOOD SIMPLE) MacDermid, it's a contemplative, doomed love story with a mean-spirited EC twist. Raimi's first big budget picture and the one about which he can say with a straight face, "It's not really a horror movie, per se."

DARKMAN gives **PHANTOM OF THE OPERA** a science-fiction twist by way of **THE TWILIGHT ZONE**. Nice guy scientist Peyton Westlake (Neeson), who is trying to develop a revolutionary synthetic skin, is mutilated and left for dead by sadistic criminals. He survives, unrecognisable, and builds up a new identity for himself as Darkman, a tormented vigilante who longs for his old life but must lurk in the shadows.



The film has just opened in the United States to excellent reviews, many of which compare the film favourably to Tim Burton's **BATMAN**. Raimi is preparing to start on his third **EVIL DEAD** picture, **MEDIEVAL DEAD**, but **DARKMAN**'s success and the fact that its ending clearly permits a sequel makes you wonder whether we won't be hearing more from Peyton Westlake. In the meantime Raimi spoke to the Dark Side during a break in **DARKMAN**'s shooting schedule.

DARK SIDE: Tell us a little about **DARKMAN**.

RAIMI: It's the story of a young scientist, Dr. Peyton Westlake, who's working on developing a kind of liquid skin that will

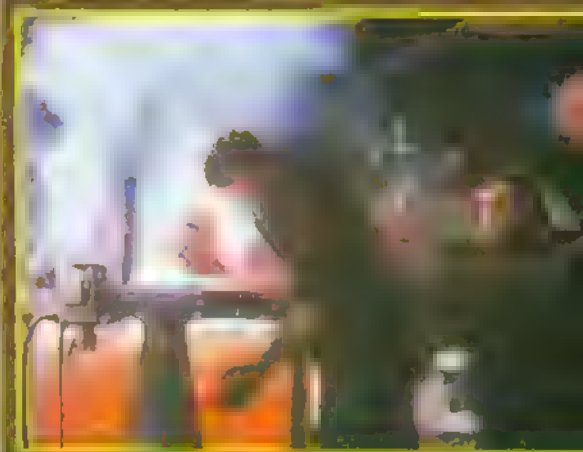
be used to treat burn victims and other people who have lost skin. He's working on developing a kind of liquid skin that will

be used to treat burn victims and other people who have lost skin. He's working on developing a kind of liquid skin that will

be used to treat burn victims and other people who have lost skin. He's working on developing a kind of liquid skin that will

completely devoted to her. Criminals break into their home to steal some documents that pertain to a deal she's arranging, and they've been told to eliminate anyone who sees them. Westlake has the misfortune to be home. They torture him and there's a terrible explosion: the house is destroyed and it's obvious that anyone inside must have been killed. That's the end of act one.

Act two opens much later. Julie is grieving for her lost love, who has in fact survived this terrible circumstance. He was found without identification and brought to a hospital where he was treated as a John Doe. He is, however, terribly mutilated: his face is that of a hideous thing. His first thought is to find her, and he does, even though his throat is still so scarred he can't speak. She, naturally, is repulsed by his, and steps away in horror. His thought then is to find a way to look through the surface and recognise him. And he does. He finds her. But she is repulsed by his new appearance, and he is consumed with a bitter rage that builds up inside him until he has to do something.





He concocts a two part plan. First, he rebuilds his own face, returns to Julie and tells her he has been in a coma since the incident at the house and returned to her the moment he awoke and realised what had happened. He tells her he's in a recovery program in Japan that restored his life, and that he can't spend too much time away from the centre. He wants to regain the love that was at the centre of his life before the accident, but while that relationship was based on trust, this one is rooted in lies. At first she's afraid and doesn't believe him - but the evidence is before her eyes. His skin looks a little artificial to us, and his behaviour is a little different, but he seems to be the same man.

He sets up a base of operations in an abandoned soap factory, and uses the skin to recreate the faces of the criminals who ruined his life, collecting the gang and sets them all against one another like rats. There is, of course, a problem with the skin: it's sensitive to the light and after about an hour in a full-on bright light it begins to deteriorate and reveal the horror beneath. He's forced into the shadows.



when the mask isn't dependent on what I why he's called the Darkman.

The heart of the movie is the relationship between Westlake and his girlfriend - she discovers what has happened to him and she's furious because she's been lied to. He retorts that if she really loved him she would have recognised him burned and mutilated and he wouldn't



have been so brave. Now, finally, the mask is no longer his appearance, even as he realises that his looks aren't the only thing that have changed. Love and vengefulness have made him into a different man and he really isn't the man she once loved. I hope audiences will be affected by DARKMAN - I've never made a picture like this before.

DARK SIDE: This is certainly a departure from the popular lead with spidee man. Have come to expect from you.

RAIMI: This story is much more rooted in the character. Special effects are usually a priority for me, but this time they're going to take a backseat to the story and character development. I want these characters to be believable people in a fantastic situation. Why do audiences love STAR TREK? It's not for the aliens or the spaceships or the time travel - they love the characters, and that's what I'd like them to love about DARKMAN.

Not only is this story different from anything I've done before, but this is also the closest I've ever come to the

overhead in movie work. I have to do things I'm used to doing myself - camera, lighting, not building all these things that to be done by people who were hired to do them. I still need to be the captain of a ship, but now I feel like I'm the captain of a whole boat. It's a real challenge and frankly, I'm terrified.

DARK SIDE: How much more work do you have to do for the movie? I'm sure, looking at the thing I directed in the last 10 minutes of a banana republic.

RAIMI: Is that what he says? That's funny, but it's not what I want - I want to make great stories that will thrill audiences. I'm going to keep my eye on the production until I learn how to do it. I don't think I'll have it all figured out by the time I finish DARKMAN, but I hope I will have learned something.

In general, the American public doesn't watch like my country. They don't know what they want. I really don't know what they want. It's probably better to be a good figure than not. I guess the thing is to just make the picture the best thing I know how to make and hope the other people like it too.

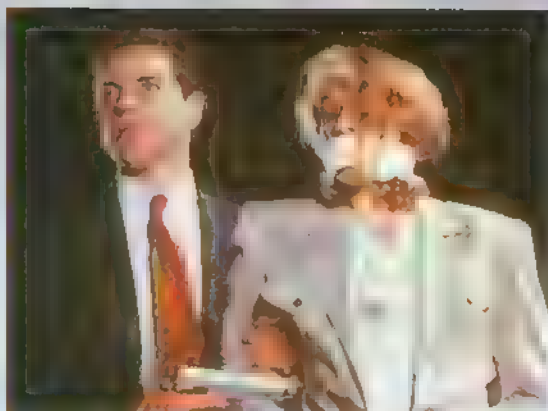
DARK SIDE: I notice an awful lot of names on the screenplay.

RAIMI: I wrote the story, and a number of different people worked on the screenplay, myself among them. The others included my brother, Ivan, who's a doctor - he helped with the medical aspects of the story. Chuck Pharrer and Josh and Dan Goldin also worked on it.

DARK SIDE: Is this a story you've had in your head for a while, or something that developed out of your other work?

RAIMI: It's been in my head for a long time. I had a lot of trouble getting it out of my head onto the screen. It was different from the way I thought it, and part of the that is that the actors have brought a great deal to it.





EVIL DEAD and **CRIMEWAVE** were all distinguished by a strong sense of black humour. Do you feel that's also true of **DARKMAN**?

RAIMI: I've toned that down a lot here, and I've also toned down the wild camera. It's a different style of story, and I want it to be told by the characters, rather than by the director. I don't want the audience to be wowed by a camera movement or a cut or a special effect. It's my turn to take the back seat.

DARK SIDE: Was **DARKMAN** produced in the same way as "**EVIL DEAD**" and "**EVIL DEAD 2**"?

RAIMI: There's usually a core group that consists of Robert Tapert, Bruce Campbell and myself. This time Robert and I produced by ourselves because Bruce is off working in his own projects.

DARK SIDE: Tell us a little about the cast.

RAIMI: A lot of really good actors, who've been a real help to me. Larry Drake from **L.A. LAW** plays one of the chief villains, and Colin Fries (playing with a questionable American accent) is a second love interest for Frances MacDormand. Liam Neeson is great — he's a very soulful man, and I think it shows in his performance. He's creating a modern day Quasimodo or Phantom of the Opera — it's a very old-fashioned idea, I guess, for your monster to be a beautiful soul trapped in an ugly body, but it can be very potent. Newer monsters tend to be snide and funny, or straightforward killing machines. My favourite monsters were always the ones

that frightened you and made you feel sorry for them at the same time... Frances is something to watch — she takes bad dialogue and makes it into something good. This is the first situation I've been in where actors come to me and say, "Sam, I don't think this is the way my character would react to this," or "Sam, I think I'd be much more afraid at this moment." In **EVIL DEAD**, **EVIL DEAD 2** and **CRIMEWAVE** the look and the style were the important things; the characters were just pawns being moved from square to square.

After **EVIL DEAD 2** I felt audiences had had enough of special effects and cameras swooshing, and I felt if I was going to take myself further I had to go back... back to the characters. It's a big

change for me and maybe it will blow big chunks, but I hope the audience will like it. Since I'm always wrong about what the audience wants, I guess I shouldn't make myself crazy about it.

DARK SIDE: What's next for you?

RAIMI: Rob Tapert and I are going to hook up with Bruce again to do **EVIL DEAD 3**, which is going to be about Bruce battling the medieval dead and confronting the evil within himself. I'm developing another script with Rob and Will Dear, the director of **HARRY AND THE HENDERSONS**. It's a science fiction picture; Rob and I will produce and Will will direct. But that's a little way down the line.





PRINTS OF DARKNESS

John Brosnan flies off the handle again...

First came the black postcard with the words 'The Sparrows Are Flying Again' inscribed across it in jagged print. Then came a circular black card with the same words on it. Then came the black pen, and then a black cup, similarly inscribed. What next, I wondered? A complete dinner service? A black Porsche? Sadly, no. What came next was the paperback edition of Stephen King's novel *The Dark Half*, in which the phrase 'The Sparrows Are Flying Again' has a grim significance.

Yes, the boys and girls at the Hodder and Stoughton publicity department were being terribly cute, though why Stephen King needs this sort of promotional treatment is beyond me. But it is policy in all book PR departments to blow their entire budgets on authors who don't need promoting, at the expense of lesser known authors who could do with a promotional boost. The same PR people have actually had a cinema advert made for James Herbert's latest novel, *Creed*, yet Herbert is another author whose books tend to sell themselves without the need for human intervention.



However, the PR people who take the cake this month are the ones at Grafton: when asked to supply a copy of Ray Bradbury's novel *A Graveyard for Lunatics* they pointed out that it wasn't science fiction or fantasy and therefore not relevant to this magazine. After being assured that anything by Ray Bradbury would be relevant to the readers of this journal they

compromised by sending me the jacket of the novel. No book, just the jacket.

So here is a review of the jacket of *A Graveyard for Lunatics*: It's a nice jacket, very stylish with a detail from Goya's *The Madhouse at Saragossa* on the front. Inside, the blurb reads 'The graveyard for lunatics is Hollywood – the Hollywood of the 1950s, facing, like Janus, both to the

past and the future; but mostly to the past. Our Hero, as bright-eyed and unheroic as they come, is a scriptwriter, a movie-huff and star-worshipper still in love with the Golden Age of Hollywood. It is 1954 and halloween when he receives an anonymous note inviting him to the Green Glades Cemetery, where he is promised a great revelation...This is a haunting evocation of a lost time when a young man could compose a life for himself from the glittering promises of his favourite movies. It is a novel which confirms the international status of Bradbury as a masterly storyteller, a writer of exceptional insight and brilliance.'

Yes, that's good, polished puffery. All in all I'd mark this jacket nine out of ten. If the book itself is as good we all have something to look forward to. Oh, the price for the actual book is £13.95.

Back to Stephen King's *The Dark Half* (NEL, £4.99). This is better than *It* and *The Tommyknockers* but not as good as his masterpiece, *Misery*. Like *Misery* its protagonist is a writer, who here is called Thad Beaumont. A 'serious' writer, Beaumont had developed a writer's block some time back and to break it started writing violent thrillers under the name of George Stark. These became very successful but Beaumont now wants to return to his earlier literary style and decides to finish with Stark, going through a 'burial' ritual complete with fake headstone. And, yes, you know what happens next - Stark acquires a life of his own, scrabbles out of his grave and starts murdering associates of Beaumont in particularly grisly ways.

It takes a while before Beaumont realises what's happening, and naturally the police are resistant to the idea that an author's pseudonym is running is running around loose and killing people. Beaumont is not only the subject of police suspicion but is painfully aware, being psychically linked to his murderous id, that Stark is making a beeline straight towards him and his family. The plotting is kind of perfunctory but overall I enjoyed this. It's not top-drawer King but will satisfy his fans and sell hundreds of thousands of copies, even without the help of all those postcards, pens and cups.

Peter James is another best-selling author. I've read only one of his two previous novels, *Possession* (his other one was *Dreamer*) and wasn't very impressed. According to the PR puff those two books were based 'on his own experiences of the supernatural' but no such claim is made for his latest novel *Sweet Heart* (Gollancz, £12.95), thank goodness. It's your standard haunted house story, tricked out with some stuff on reincarnation, slickly written but with no real surprises and an ending that is as predictable as a politician's speech. But it's what you can describe as 'a good read' and I enjoyed it far more than *Possession*.

Next we have *The Owl 2* (NEL £3.50) by Bob Forward. I haven't read *The Owl 1* and, on the basis of #2, I can easily live with that. Alexander l'Hiboux is the Owl. He hasn't slept for 9 years, ever since his wife got blown up by a bomb meant for

him (he was an investigative journalist). Though severely shredded she wasn't dead and he had to kill her with his bare hands to put her out of her agony. Now, clearly deranged from all that lack of sleep, he



prowls the streets of LA armed to the teeth, and kills bad men for money.

In this novel he gets involved with a 16 year old girl (with long, slim legs, as we are regularly reminded) after saving her from a kidnap attempt. The complicated plot that follows is interrupted periodically by the Owl blowing away large numbers of bad guys with his vast armoury. The start of Chapter 3 gives you a taste of the style: "It was getting close to 5pm. Four, maybe five guys dead in less than two hours. Not bad, I've done better, but hey, it was a Monday."



My favourite horror novel of this month's batch has to be Joe R. Lansdale's *The Drive-In 2 (Not Just One Of Them Sequels)* (NEL, £3.50). This is just as weird and disturbing as *The Drive-In* and if you read that you know what I'm on about. In the first book a bunch of people attending an all-night horror show at a Texas drive-in got trapped in limbo when the entire drive-in got transported by a malign, unknown force. Conditions soon deteriorated and cannibalism was just one of the horrors the trapped movie-goers had to endure. That book ended with the survivors finding themselves in a strange landscape complete with dinosaurs, and this one describes what our two heroes find in this screwy, frightening world - which turns out to be some kind of alien movie set (or is it?). This has the same black humour and unrelenting nastiness as the previous book. Lansdale is rather like

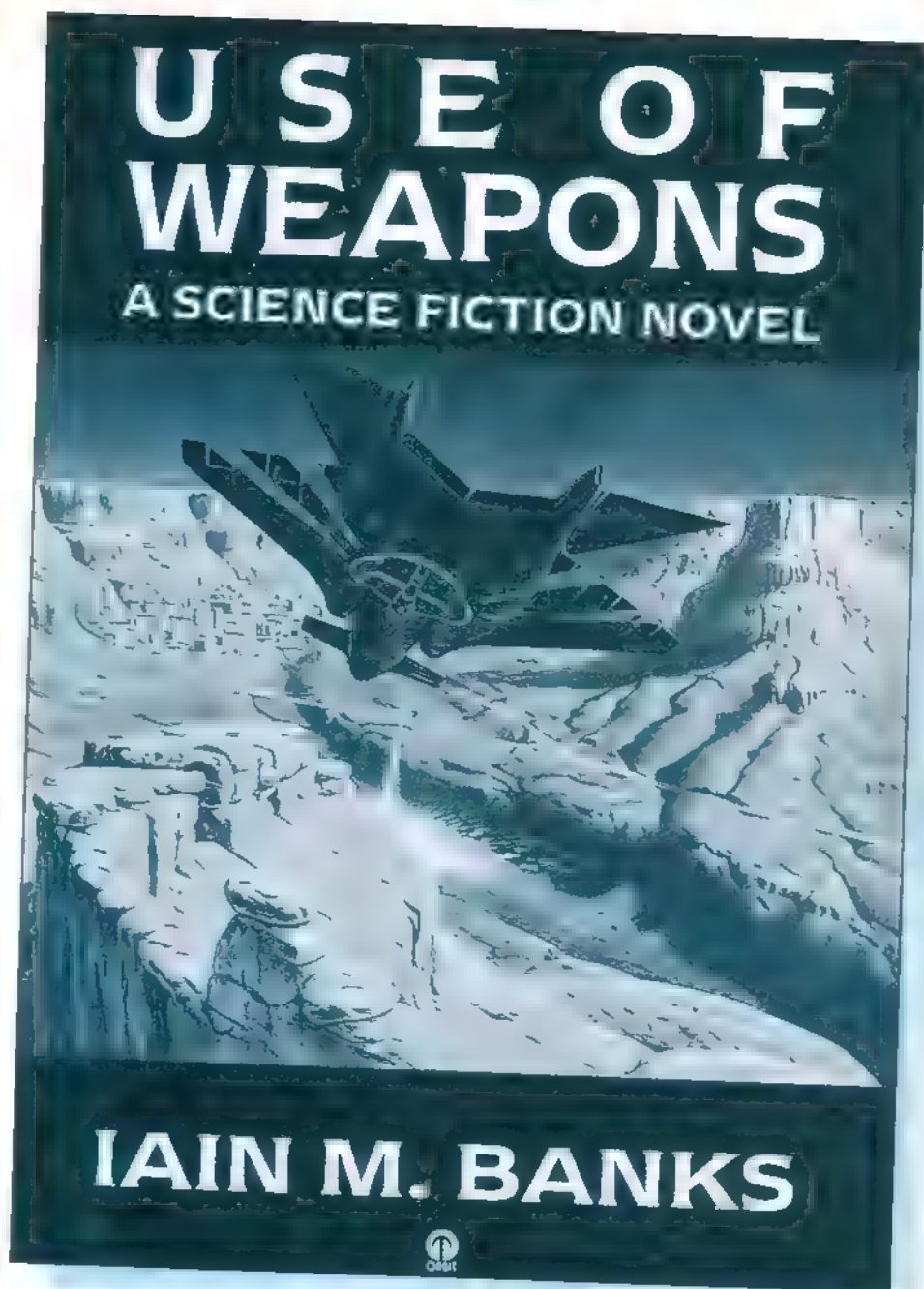




Stephen King with a strong European streak of surrealism. Definitely off the wall.

Now for some nice, safe science fiction: *Breaking Strain* (Pan, £3.99) by Paul Preuss, is a rewrite of a novella written in 1948 by Arthur C. Clarke. Why? Don't ask me, but there's a fashion at the moment for old works by SF masters to be rewritten and updated by younger writers. This is a perfectly workmanlike space opera about a young woman who is the product of an illegal experiment and has special powers thanks to the fancy telemetry built into her. Under the name of Ellen Troy (ouch) she becomes a Special Investigator with the Space Board and ends up becoming involved with all sorts of skullduggery on a space station called Venus Prime. She exposes the baddies and in the process learns the truth about her past. Readable stuff, yeah, but it could have been produced by a computer.

Also pretty safe is *The Gates of Eden* (NEL, £3.50) by Brian Stableford. As it



was originally published in the US back in 1983 its politics have become a bit dated – 300 years in the future and the Soviet Union is still causing problems! Basically, this is a nice, old-fashioned alien world story. Colonisers find what seems to be the perfect world, Naxos, but a party of investigators sent down to case the joint all mysteriously die. Expert xenobiologist Lee Caretta is sent for and proceeds to uncover the planet's nasty secret. And, like the heroine above, he solves a personal problem in the process, in this case, why any hint of sexual overtures from a woman causes him to black out. It's all to do with an incident with his Mum...

Now for some SF that is far from safe or nice: Iain M. Banks' latest epic, *Use of Weapons* (Orbit, £12.95). This is a huge, complex, galaxy-spanning space opera written by an author who just gets better and better. It concerns a man called Cheradenine Zakalwe who is an agent for the ambiguous civilisation known as the Culture. His job is to drop in on worlds and help out, militarily, whichever side in a local conflict that the Culture considers to be the 'right' one in the long term.

The book, hip-hopping back and forth in time, covers many such operations, and also his relationship with his Culture control, Diziet Sma and her intelligent drone, Skaffen-Armitiskaw. But the core of the novel is learning why Zakalwe is such a tortured soul, and when Banks finally reveals the whole truth we realize he has pulled off a marvellous piece of deception upon us. So clever is the trick that you want to start reading the book all over again because the ending gives you an entirely different viewpoint on all the events described (on reflection, I realized that acts of deception play a central part in most, if not all, of Banks' novels). Superior stuff. Science fiction doesn't get much better than this. ■

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Ponder on the truth of that statement for a while and if any of you out there in the real world are still smiling afterwards, a quick blast on any one of the following games should help to put you in the correctly sinister frame of mind.

SHADOW OF THE BEAST II

Do any of you remember Shadow of the Beast part 1? If not, you missed a real treat and the chance to take on Zelek, the Beast Mage and loyal servant of the tyrannical Beast Lord Maletoth. Not to worry though, for in this superb sequel, you get the opportunity to do it all over again, but with much more style.

In a desperate bid to overcome the wrath of his master, Zelek transforms himself into the shape of a giant flying beast to wing his way over to your house and kidnap your baby sister.

Whisked away to Kara-Moon,

a far off and very hostile place, she will be subjected to years of pain and torture until she finally becomes the warrior messenger to the Beast Lord, unless, that is, you decide to play the game and do something about it.

Making the most of some excellent parallax scrolling, your task is to fight your way past the dragons and demons of Kara-Moon to reach the Beast Mage in his tower of doom.

Armed only with your mace and loincloth, take care when approaching strangers. Some actually want to help you by offering information, whereas others merely crave your death.

When approaching other beings like the giant worms, killer piranhas and venomous

snakes, don't go looking for clues, just kill or be killed, as contact with any of them will deplete your energy.

Keep your eyes constantly peeled for gold and extra weapons along the road, as you will need everything you can get your hands on to face the almighty Zelek.

Shadow of the Beast II is a superb sequel to a stunning original. The main character is easy to control, while the beasts he will encounter are programmed to act and react to your actions. Some are intelligent while others are not, you'll have to work out which is which.

For sheer playability and atmosphere, Shadow of the Beast is an epic of a game and one which will certainly have you glancing over your shoulder when the lights go down



SHUFFLEPUCK CAFE

Finishing off on what might be termed a slightly lighter note, why not try your arm at a little air hockey in the delightful ambience of the Shufflepuck Cafe.

You are the galaxy's most successful Krypton-3 salesman, but on the way to close the biggest sale of your career, your aircar blows a valve, leaving your very definitely on the wrong side of town.

There's nothing for it but to nlp into the nearest joint and make a phone call. Little did you know what you were letting yourself in for.

There, in the dimly lit cafe, sit some of the galaxy's biggest misfits, challenging you to take them on in a "friendly" game of Shufflepuck.

OK, no problem, you know the game, hit the puck backwards and forwards across the table. However, some of these beings have magical powers which will knock even the most ardent player. Take on the mental skills of Princess Bejin, the General, Skip Feeney and then challenge the reigning champion, Biff Raunch, an ugly mother who's a terrible winner and on even worse loser.

Domark's Shufflepuck Cafe is an absolute winner all the way. Despite being incredibly simple in concept, the weird and alien opponents will keep you coming back to the table for more and more, be it punishment or victory.

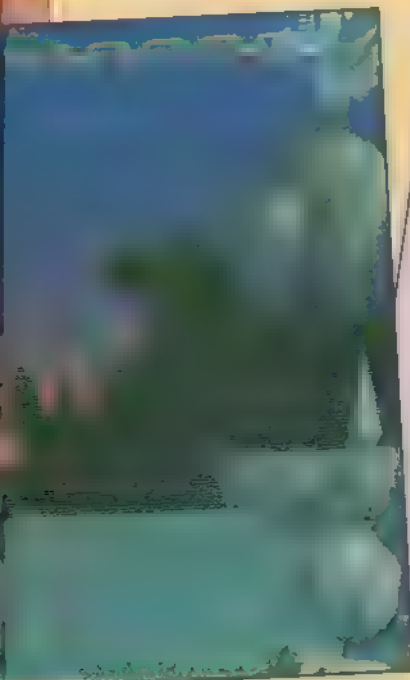
Take on the trainer droid DC3-ALSO for starters. Here you can get a feel for the table and

also experiment with the size of your paddle and the techniques

Once you feel confident enough, challenge some of the other bar room characters, but be warned, nobody likes a smartass. Win too often and you'll earn the wrath of the regulars, lose and they won't respect you too much either.

There's fearsome fun to be had in the shadows of the cafe, just be sure that you can handle it and make that all-important phone call to the gravcar repair shop.

If you like your horror on the light side for a change, try Shufflepuck Cafe, you won't be disappointed. You never know, play well enough and you might even get your name on the champions' board. Heck, they might even accept you as a regular. I wouldn't count on it though.

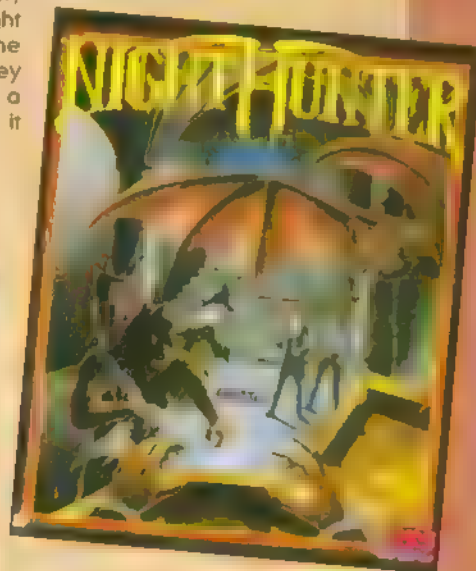


NIGHT HUNTER

Horror in its more traditional forms leaps up to bite your throat in the form of France based Ubisoft's Night Hunter, an awesome yarn about the evil Count Dracula and his latest bid for world domination.

Up until this newest outbreak of ghoulish goings on, the world was protected from the wrath of the vampires by sacred amulets scattered around the towns, but you as Dracula, have decided to go out and appropriate these for yourself.

Don't think life, or should we say life after death, is going to be easy though. Vampire hunter Professor Van Helsing has gath-



ered together a formidable army of killers, armed with stakes and crosses a-plenty to ruin your plans.

To make things more entertaining as you scour the surroundings to find special keys and parchments to aid your quest, you have the ability to transform yourself into a werewolf or a bat, depending on your situation. Remember however, that although the werewolf cannot be killed by a stake, a stray silver bullet will do you no good at all.

During your transformations, you have a limited time before you revert to good old Dracula, so use them well to clear aquatic obstacles and bottomless pits.

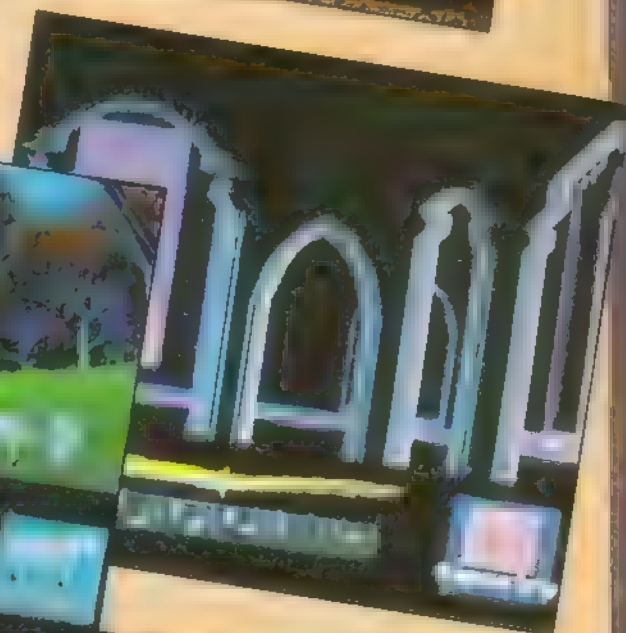
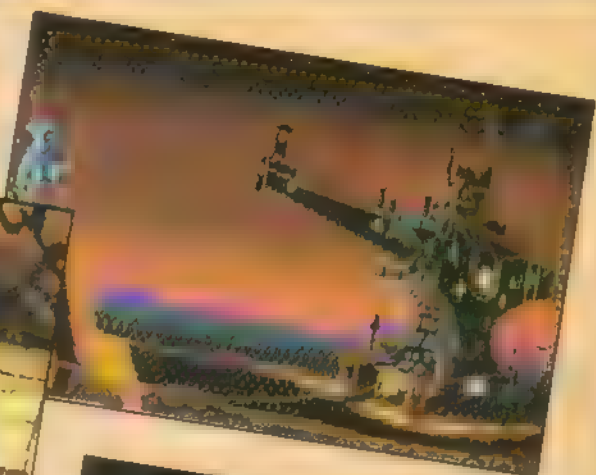
Priests, archers, sorcerers and policemen, they're all out to get you as you seek the elusive amulets, but by artful handwork from the werewolf, and some nifty toothwork from the Count, you should be able to survive until morning, before you creep back into your crypt for the day.

Movement of the games figures may be a little jerky, but the imaginative scenario and gameplay more than compensate in this superbly crafted game. You may need some time to perfect the throat biting techniques, but the effect is well worth working at.

LOOM

Moving silently onto the subtler, yet far more sinister world of spell weaving, Lucasfilm's new fantasy adventure, Loom, creates a world so frighteningly complex that you'll need total dedication if you want to survive.

Set in a shadowy world of the past, where guilds held sway over every aspect of life, you take on the role of Bobbin Treadbare, a seventeen year old boy in the care of the guild of weavers and, as yet, unaware of his destiny.



The weavers, quite apart from their skills at cloth making and dyeing, are also pretty adept at spell casting. They've got spells of transcendence, spells of twisting, spells of opening, the list is endless and, of course, if you knew just how to cast these spells, you would be able to solve the puzzle of Loom in a matter of minutes. But you don't.

You are summoned to a meeting of the High Council, only to find some big hoo-hah about your mother, Cygna, going on. Then, before you know it, all of the elders are transformed into swans and whisked away before your very eyes, leaving you alone in front of the Great Loom with only a couple of clues as to what's going on from your adoptive mother Hetchel (before she turns into a duck, that is).

So what's it all about? In the beginning, two great shadows passed over the earth, almost destroying everything upon its surface. Now, a third great shadow approaches and chaos is spreading across the loom. The other members of the guild have been rescued and flown to safety but you, son of the loom, are left to find your own way to the rest of the flock.

As destruction draws near, you have to find your mother and embrace the darkness. Only you can save the guild from destruction.

So there you have it. Your only assistance is the cost-aside distaff of the chief elder, with which you must learn to weave the spells to help you save the world.

Included within this excellent package is a booklet, which outlines all of the spells which may be of use to you, but to master them, you must gain experience through your travels and experiment with the keyboard to write down the particular code of musical notes that form the magical drafts.

In this game, it is essential to look everywhere and examine everything. You start off with the knowledge of one spell, that of opening. Use it wisely and follow the clues to lead you off the island. Your destiny lies beyond the sea where the darkness gathers.

Loom is definitely a game you will need to play on your own; others may soon grow a little weary of the musical tones as you attempt to formulate spells, but sound apart, the game is incredibly addictive, with easy to follow instructions and excellent graphics.

One helpful hint to PC owners would be to install this game onto your hard disc before playing, otherwise you're in for a lot of chopping and changing as the action progresses.

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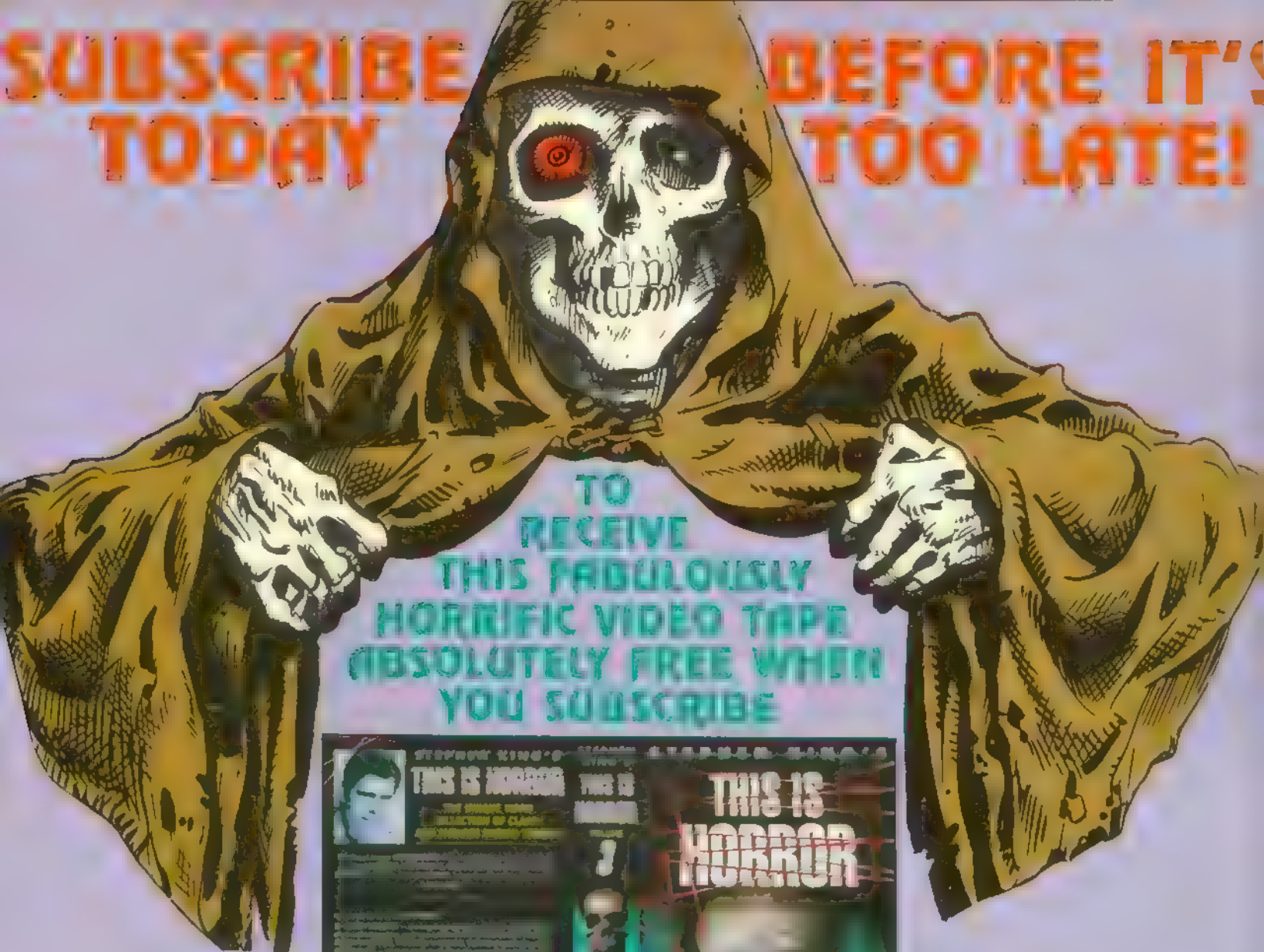
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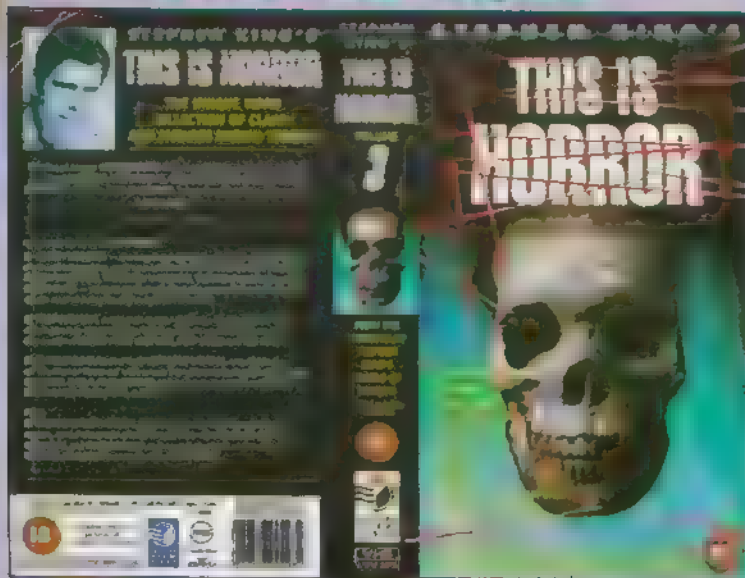
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Fiction by
Nicholas Royale

FOR EVER



Nell rings me from work. It's 8.30pm, she stayed late to clear her desk. *Do you want to go for a drink?* she asks. Was Hitler a Nazi? Of course I want to go for a drink. She mentions a place in Belsize Park. I tell her I'll get the Northern Line and be there as soon as I can. *I'll wait for you on the platform at Belsize Park*, she says. About 9.15. When she hangs up I'm running round the flat

whooping with joy. I almost don't believe it. I've been in love with this woman for months and have made no secret of it but she has turned down all my invitations. Now she's rung me up to go for a drink!

I'm at Seven Sisters in three minutes instead of the usual ten. I sprint down the escalator and for once am in luck. There's a train standing there and the doors are just closing but I squeeze through. I'm so excited. My head fills with pictures of Nell. The tiny creases in her nose when she laughs, her shining eyes, the lovely lock of hair that sticks out on the left and so annoys her. It's great to work with someone you fancy like mad, and better if they fancy you back. But it's more than that. I love her. I feel that given a chance we could be together for ever.

I normally take a book to read on the tube but tonight I'm so hyper you could offer me a proof copy of Iain Banks' next novel of Kafka's missing manuscripts and I'd say no thanks. It usually takes five or six minutes between Highbury & Islington and King's Cross, but tonight the ads above the windows start to yellow with age.

It's risky using the Northern Line if you're in a hurry. I begin to wish I'd gone by taxi as I take the King's Cross steps three at a time. But again I'm blessed with luck. The indicator board says NEXT TRAIN APPROACHING and it's for the Edgware Branch. I'm riding on a terrific high.

I sit on the edge of a double seat with my elbows resting on my knees. In 15 minutes I'll be there.

We'll be a bit nervous but after a couple of drinks we'll relax. I'm eager to know all there is to know about Nell. She must like me or she wouldn't have run me up. It can't have been all one-sided. I think of the way her lips curl back and her teeth glisten when she's excited by something and I want to kiss them. Her cheeks look so soft. What will they feel like?

The train stops between Euston and Camden Town. So what? It wouldn't be the Northern Line if it didn't hang around in a few tunnels. I've made a concerted effort over the past couple of months to avoid imagining Nell naked. And failed. I wonder if I'll get to find out what she looks like. It doesn't need to be tonight. This year or next, it doesn't matter.

The train hasn't moved for three or four minutes. I'm trying to ignore it. If it goes now I'll only be five minutes late. She'll wait. I wish I'd got a taxi, all the same. I bet Nell took a cab. I think about that jacket she wears. Was it tailored to hug her waist

and the top of her hips or did she give it the shape it's acquired?

I irritate her by staring, I think. But it's her eyes. They're captivating. When she had her hair cut recently I touched it and she didn't flinch. I almost believed there was a god somewhere watching over me.

The train jerks into motion. I'm flooded with relief and realise I had managed to subjugate most of my anxiety. But it cuts out and stops abruptly. We rock in our seats. How long is this going to take? I should have been there five minutes ago. She'll wait. Even if it doesn't go for a few minutes she'll still wait.

Five minutes pass and my scalp starts to sweat. How long is it going to sit here? I look round the carriage. A man and a woman sit opposite each other chatting away unconcerned. It's 9.30. If it goes now I'll be half an hour late. She'd wait that long. But it doesn't move.

And then it does. It crawls forward ten yards and stops dead.

I'm getting a pain in my head on the right-hand side at the front. The man and woman are still chattering. They don't care. The pain appears in a second place, at the back of my head on the left-hand side. I wonder what the connection might be. I check my watch - 9.35 - and examine the weave in the seat cover. I take out a tissue and wipe it across my forehead.

Please wait, Nell! If I get there and she's gone that'll be it. I won't get another chance. My chest tightens. If the train goes now I'll be a different person. You won't recognise me. I'll never push past people on the street, I'll wait before striding across zebra crossings.

It's 9.45 and suddenly it's not a joke any more. My hands are shaking. I've never suffered from claustrophobia but I am now. The man and woman might as well be sitting in a park on a sunny afternoon. They make it worse. I bury my head in my hands and try to block them out. The pattern on the seat cover swarms before my eyes as if the threads are rearranging themselves like a writhing mass of bloodworms. I press my fists into my temples in an attempt to stop the tears of frustration I feel springing to my eyes. My watch says it's 9.50. We've been here 35 minutes. Why hasn't there been some sort of announcement?

9.55. What makes me think the train will ever move again? Nothing. It might sit here for ever. These people and I, we're in hell. Only they don't mind. So maybe only I'm in hell. They're part of the torture. *Oh Nell, Nell, Nell!* Through stinging tears I think I can see a face in the seat-cover pattern. Composed of interwoven threads of black and different shades of blue, with black eyes like cigarette burns.

My mouth is dry, my lips chapped. My tears are hitting the carriage floor. The face terrifies me. I tear my eyes away and stand up, stumbling into the glass partition. The man and woman don't even lower their voices. I'm convinced now that the train is never going to move. It's a nightmare and I'm not going to wake up. It's difficult to breathe. I'm going mad.

The train moves. Part of me doesn't want to believe it in case it's a trap. But I seize on the movement and rush forward to the interconnecting door. I pull the window down and gulp sooty air. Wind dries the sweat on my face and neck. The train is moving. It's even accelerating. *Oh Nell!* It's not going to stop again. I'm going to get there and you'll have waited for me. You'll have waited a whole hour.

The station I had believed I would never see again - Camden Town - slides into view. The doors open, I wonder if I should get off and find a cab, but they close again. I'm better off on the train. It's quicker as long as it keeps moving. Chalk Farm. 10.20. Belsize Park. *She's there!* I see her on the platform. I race back down towards her, barely able to focus on her face. I don't think about what I'm doing as I hug her and she hugs me back just as tight. Still shaking, I can't describe the feeling of relief.

I look at her face. She's smiling at me, her lips pulled back, her nose wrinkling. I'm the happiest man as we run for the lift, both sensing the need to get above ground. There's a man already in the lift standing in the corner with his face to the wall. The doors close behind us and we kiss for the first time. Her lips are so soft, her saliva so sweet. I hold her face in my hands and tell her I love her. The lift stops abruptly in mid-air.

We separate, hearts thumping. The man in the corner turns round. His face is blue and black, a tapestry of seething threads, his eyes cigarette burns. Nell is gripping my hand. Her nails draw blood. *I love you*, she says. For ever.

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